

Classics in Extremis

Edmund Richardson

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CLASSICS IN EXTREMIS

The Edges of
Classical Reception

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CLASSICS IN EXTREMIS

THE EDGES OF CLASSICAL RECEPTION

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Henry Stead is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the Open University. He was awarded the first Michael Comber Studentship for Classical Reception Studies by the Open University and St Hilda's College, Oxford. His first book, *A Cockney Catullus*, was published in 2015 by Oxford University Press. His current project, 'Brave New Classics (1917–1956)', explores the impact of the Russian Revolution on British culture through the lens of contemporary engagement with the Greek and Roman classics.

Jennifer Wallace teaches in the Faculty of English, Cambridge University, and has been researching in the field of classical reception – in its widest definition – for many years. Her publications include *Shelley and Greece: Rethinking Romantic Hellenism* (1997), *The Cambridge Introduction to Tragedy* (2007) and *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature, 1790–1880* (2015), co-edited

with Norman Vance. She is currently writing a book entitled *Witnessing Tragedy since 9/11* and editing *A Cultural History of Tragedy in the Modern Age*, both for Bloomsbury.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Edmund Richardson

For I am every dead
thing,
In whom Love
wrought new
alchemy.

For his art did
express
A quintessence even from
nothingness,
From dull privations, and lean
emptiness;
He ruin'd me, and I am re-
begot
Of absence, darkness, death:
things which are not.

John Donne, 'Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day'¹

In the dying days of 2017, I found myself considering alternative titles for this volume. *Classics in Extremis: A Survival Guide*. *Classics in Extremis: Reclaiming the Ancient World*. *Classics in Extremis: [insert controversy of the day here]*. Classics comes at you fast, these days.

Accustomed to fighting off charges of their 'irrelevance',² classicists have often woken up, lately, to more relevance than they bargained for: daily updates on the colonization of their field by the torchbearers of contemporary politics; death threats for scholars;³ white supremacists brandishing shields emblazoned with the Roman *fascēs*.⁴ 'The Alt Right believes Western civilization is the pinnacle of human achievement and supports its three foundational pillars: Christianity, the European nations, and the Graeco-Roman legacy.'⁵ And much (much) more in the same vein.

How we talk about the classical past, display it, teach it, adapt it, remember it and forget it (and who gets to be one of ‘us’, doing this) has always been charged and political. This volume is (more or less accidentally) a manifesto for those who seek to engage the highly politicized classics of today: it explores how such battles have been fought (and won), often against the steepest of odds, throughout the afterlives of antiquity. The questions at stake – about whom the ancient world ‘belongs’ to, and who gets to participate in classical discourse – turn out to have been in play for a very long time. There has rarely been a moment where the classical past has not been a battleground, a clashing of ‘extremes’. For many readers of, and contributors to, this volume, ‘classics is political’ may have a very different resonance than when this project was first conceived in 2014. But that is just another way of saying: classical reception happens to you, too.

Across the world, in recent years, antiquity has been appropriated to support radically different political agendas. Attempts within contemporary right-wing politics to lay exclusive claim to the ancient world⁶ have done battle with diametrically opposed visions of what the classics can (and should) stand for. (In this volume, Maarten De Pourcq explores a production of Aeschylus’s *Suppliant Women*, staged in Vienna in 2016. It was intended ‘to give voice to the fate of refugees’ – but was interrupted by members of the so-called Identitary Movement, who ‘squirited artificial blood, threw around flyers saying “*Multikulti tötet*” [Multiculturalism kills], and shouted the Spartan battle cry from Zack Snyder’s film *300*’.)⁷ Many scholars have attempted to engage with and rebut such appropriations of the classics. In November 2016, the Society for Classical Studies put out a statement noting that ‘as scholars and teachers, we condemn the use of the texts, ideals, and images of the Greek and Roman world to promote racism or a view of the Classical world as the unique inheritance of a falsely-imagined and narrowly-conceived western civilization’.⁸ Donna Zuckerberg, writing in *Eidolon* a few days earlier, served the American alt-right with an eviction notice:

It is time for Classics as a discipline to say to these men: we will not give you more fodder for your ludicrous theory that white men are morally and intellectually superior to all other races and genders. We do not support your myopic vision of ‘Western Civilization.’ Your version of antiquity is shallow, poorly contextualized, and unnuanced. When you use the classics to support your hateful ideas, we will push back by exposing just how weak your understanding is, how much you have invested in something about which you know so little.⁹

Unsurprisingly, that eviction notice has not been heeded. The response from its targets was, if anything, gleeful. 'If Zuckerberg et al. don't want to help the alt-right explore and understand the great world of antiquity, that is perfectly fine', as one writer put it. 'We can do it ourselves.'¹⁰

To suggest that 'extreme' classics is a uniquely urgent topic today is to be somewhat guilty of self-indulgence. Long before the invention of the internet troll, the ancient world was the favoured tool of a wretched assortment of Nazis, slave-owners, apartheid supporters, misogynists and cheerleaders for every kind of oppression. Classics has been a very effective tool of repression, for a very long time. Rhetoric about 'a narrowly-conceived western civilization' has not, all of a sudden, just become dangerous. People on the receiving end of Victorian exclusion, or South African repression, or American enslavement, or Nazi extermination, have felt a classical jackboot many times before. As Lorna Hardwick notes, while the contexts are very different, these appropriations of antiquity share a similar agenda: 'The feature common to all these examples is the aim of creating shared perceptions about antiquity that legitimised the attitudes and behaviour inculcated by dominant social and educational institutions.'¹¹ And such oppressive discourses have often been aided and abetted by classical scholars. In 1932, for instance, Kenneth Scott sung Mussolini's praises in *The Classical Journal*:

'Rome', he [Mussolini] says, 'is destined to become once more the city which directs the civilization of the whole of Western Europe.' So much for the ideal of the leader of Fascism! But is it only an ideal which he has gained from reading the past history of his country? I think not. He found in post-war Italy a land impoverished, demoralized, dissonant, and torn by factious strife, weak in government, in national spirit, in foreign prestige, a land rapidly sinking into the abyss of communism. Where could he find a 'parallel' for this situation in his perusal of Roman History? The answer is in the Italy that Augustus Caesar had to deal with after the Social and Civil Wars which had harried Italy and the empire for a century ... How History repeats itself! ... Symbols of the past and its significance for modern Italy are everywhere in Italian life today – even on postage stamps, where we find Julius Caesar, Augustus, and the wolf of the Capitoline. Perhaps Fascist theory is correct, and the Roman Empire never really died but goes on in the New Italy and its premier.¹²

Classics has been made to stand for some horrible things. But it has also stood against them. Can the classics make the world a better place, even in the unlikeliest circumstances? Can those without power

use the ancient world to effect change? For marginalized groups throughout history, the classical has not just been a symbol of repression, but a symbol of hope. As Andújar puts it, many have embraced ‘the potential of ancient Greek culture to change their present and shape the future’.¹³ That potential – the ways in which the ancient world could change the present, and shape the future, for marginalized or disempowered individuals and groups – has become arguably the central preoccupation of classical reception studies, in recent years. Recent work by Bradley, Greenwood, Goff, Vasunia, Williamson and the Network on Ancient and Modern Imperialisms has challenged the Western focus of classical receptions.¹⁴ The ‘Classics and Class in Britain, 1789–1917’ project, led by Hall, has prompting a wide-ranging reassessment of the social scope of encounters with the classical.¹⁵ The work of scholars such as Hurst and Ingleheart on gender and sexuality has likewise challenged the gendered ‘norms’ of the histories of scholarship.¹⁶ Meanwhile, fragmentary and uncertain acts of reception have become the focus for key recent studies: Leonard, Billings and Prins have explored, in different ways, how incomplete sources and unfulfilled desires drive engagements with the ancient world.¹⁷

Classics in Extremis aims both to take forward and to complicate this marginal turn in classical reception studies. It examines some of the most unexpected, most hard-fought and (potentially) most revealing acts of classical reception: it asks how the reception of the ancient world changes – and what the classical looks like – when it is under strain. It argues, as Hardwick puts it, that ‘classics *in extremis* is more able, rather than less able, to operate in situations of trauma, in social, moral and political *extremis* ... In operating at “the edge”, classics has helped to redefine the edge’.¹⁸ Contributors explore a diverse range of ‘extreme’ contexts, characters and themes in this volume: its chapters should be seen not as parts of a monolithic intellectual project, but as an overlapping series of studies, with complementary (and sometimes contrasting) preoccupations and perspectives. The volume is organized broadly chronologically, beginning with a theoretical perspective on the questions in play from Hardwick, then tracing encounters with classics *in extremis* from the seventeenth century to the present day. It makes no claim to comprehensiveness, aiming rather to synthesize current debates, and map out key questions for future scholarship in the field.

One key part of this volume’s agenda also represents a shift in perspective. For many contributors to this volume, ‘extreme’ classics is not just what happens to ‘them’, to the subjects of classical reception studies. It is a discourse in which (for better or worse) we, as scholars of the classical past, are implicated. (Of course, that ‘we’ is also highly

problematic.) And it is not a discourse which lends itself to the customary academic distance. It hits you over your morning coffee, with the latest news bulletins. Hence, that point again: classical reception isn't just an academic practice which you, the reader of this volume, may be engaged in – it's what takes place around you, what is done by you and what is done to you. We are always-already implicated (whether implicitly or explicitly) in classical reception; there is no such thing as a disinterested observer. (What this might mean for how we approach the field as a whole, I will discuss in more detail later.)

What, then, can make classics 'extreme'? The archetype of the classical outsider was arguably fixed by Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*: standing outside the locked gates of a Christminster (Oxford) college, hoping in vain for admittance. Here, it is (apparently) clear where the ancient world belongs; where power and authority over the past reside:

The gates were shut, and, by an impulse, he took from his pocket the lump of chalk which as a workman he usually carried there, and wrote along the wall:

'I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?'—Job xii. 3.19

What, then, is classics *in extremis*? A catalogue of frustrated Judes – of faint voices with little or no impact, characters glimpsed outside the gates? Far from it. Contributors to this volume seek to move away from that model, and to unsettle it. Fundamentally, the aim of *Classics in Extremis* is not to trace the edges of classical reception – but rather to complicate them. It engages with marginal case studies which problematize the notion of 'the margins'; discourses where centre and margins, insider and outsider, cannot be located comfortably.

Obstacles to classical reception are at the forefront of many chapters. What happens to encounters with the ancient world in extraordinary situations: under censorship, for instance, or in times of war? Edith Hall explores the ways in which David Jones's 'harrowing epic', *In Parenthesis*, 'was a product of extreme trauma suffered in an extreme situation – a manmade death-trap of barbed wire, vermin, machine-gun fire and mud'.²⁰ Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis charts a very different wartime landscape, in her study of the remarkable recovery of Greek vases in Ottoman and Revolutionary Greece. Does the past become more or less valuable when access to it becomes fraught and dangerous? How is the ancient world read and understood differently, in such circumstances – and what new insights can such encounters offer us?

Extraordinary readers are at the heart of a number of chapters.

Many have had to fight hard for access to knowledge of the ancient world – constrained by social circumstances, gender, sexual identity, race and national identity, among other factors. Why was antiquity worth fighting for, for them? How are their readings of the classics different from some of their more solidly situated peers? This is another way of asking: Who gets to talk about classics? And who listens to their voices – both at the time and in today’s scholarship?

The intersections between social class and classical reception have been a matter of long-standing interest, driven by Hall’s 2008 article, ‘Putting the Class into Classical Reception’.²¹ For working-class readers, building a connection with the classics, within a system inclined to deny them that knowledge, was no small feat. Working-class classics have been put through the factory, dragged up and down the coal-mine, grasped in fragments and understood no less powerfully, and no less significantly, for all that. They often, however, require the deployment of fresh interpretative strategies in order to be fully understood. For instance, the 1841 *Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd* recounts the author’s life in a factory – but the narrative terminates, unfinished, because at that point in the manuscript, a piece of machinery amputated William Dodd’s arm.

Significantly, the most well-known British working-class encounters with the classics are fictional. Jude Fawley has already been mentioned – but the lack of equally well-known historical working-class encounters with the classics is striking. Henry Stead notes that many working-class claims on the ancient world have gone unnoticed by scholarship for the simple reason that few have thought to go looking for them: located ‘so far from the centre of the historical and cultural maps of our time that their very existence is called into question’.²² But, just where we might not expect to find classical reception taking place, there it is. Stead’s study of British coalminers’ classics explores the ways in which the ancient world was accessed and received by miners who ‘worked at and indeed beyond the limits of our habitable world’.²³ The physicality of all these receptions is striking: Stead’s miners, Hall’s soldiers, Petsalis-Diomidis’s excavators all offer us (in different ways) stories of blood, sweat and classics.

Such case studies, then, suggest a need to re-examine and recalibrate our own expectations of what ‘normal’ classical reception looks like, and how it can best be recovered and narrated. Is it appropriate, Stead in particular asks, for classical reception to focus on the interventions of ‘extraordinary’ readers? How useful are current methodologies in the field for understanding the classics of ordinary readers, who contribute in arguably more significant ways to broader cultural dynamics? (For instance, major advances in circulation of classical texts, over the last few centuries, have only taken place

because of skilled working-class labour: in printing, typesetting and producing mass-market editions. A skilled typesetter could be said to have done as much a scholar to advance knowledge of the ancient world.) Are in-depth case studies the best way to understand this bigger picture – or can it be more easily viewed at a distance, possibly through bringing to bear very different research methods? This is, as Stead puts it, a katabatic classical reception: descending into a hitherto-unknown realm. ‘The characters we meet in this under-realm are neither timid, nor do they hold back, rather they seek out engagements with antiquity irrespective of whether or not they are considered to be excluded from so doing.’²⁴

A very different picture of ‘classics from the bottom up’ can be found in Jennifer Ingleheart’s study of an equally neglected (though for different reasons) text, the 1881 pornographic novel *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain: The Recollections of a Mary-Ann*. Ingleheart shows how ‘the tension between the cultural prestige of classics in Victorian Britain and the reception of classical material within the doubly marginalized and stigmatized genre of homosexual pornography’²⁵ opens up fresh perspectives on nineteenth-century encounters with antiquity, and the histories of sexuality. ‘Looking to the margins’, Ingleheart suggests, ‘results in a very different version of the classics from the standard Victorian model.’²⁶ For Ingleheart, these texts are powerful and significant because of, not in spite of, their liminal and stigmatized status.

The possibilities offered by marginal status, and a place outside the dominant classical discourses of the time, are further explored in two chapters by Amanda Klause and Jennifer Wallace, which engage with questions of classical reception and gender. Recent scholarship has revealed, in powerful ways, the battles which women have had to fight, to gain access to the classical past. As Isobel Hurst put it, women ‘had to work extremely hard, sometimes without any support, to read classical authors. Nevertheless, for the Victorian girl Latin and Greek are associated with empowerment’.²⁷ Klause explores Aphra Behn’s extraordinary 1683 poem, ‘To the Unknown Daphnis on his Excellent Translation of *Lucretius*’. Despite Behn’s claim to lack classical knowledge, and standing to intervene in the male-dominated discourses of literature, she turns out to be ‘a cunning and active (re)interpreter’,²⁸ who turns marginality into agency. Looking to the nineteenth century, Wallace asks why the classically themed photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron have polarized opinion, ever since they were first exhibited. She argues that it is Cameron’s ‘self-conscious amateurism which paradoxically gives the images their vivacity and poignant ephemerality’ – and that Cameron used her marginal position within the world of photography to her advantage:

‘She converted marginality, feminine amateurism and technical failure into a positive art form, revelling in the subversion of orthodoxy and her own outsider/insider status.’²⁹

The question of who ‘owns’ the ancient world is, of course, in play equally powerfully within discourses of nation and race. Should the ‘centre’ of classical discourse (inasmuch as such a term is helpful; more on this later) be located in Oxford or Orissa, Berlin or Buenos Aires? Today’s controversies over the ‘whiteness’ (or lack thereof) of the ancient world³⁰ match in vitriol the widespread argument that the modern Greeks have no claim on the legacy of ancient Greece. A notable feature of the Greek War of Independence, this polemic resurfaced recently in *Focus* magazine, where ‘modern Greeks were described as indolent sloths, cheats and liars, masters of corruption, unworthy descendants of their glorious Hellenic past’.³¹ Petsalis-Diomidis explores the ways in which Greeks have been written out of the histories of classical reception: how the unacknowledged interventions of non-elite Greeks profoundly influenced the creation ‘of the classical canon of Greek vases’.³² Andújar takes a different perspective on the same question of ‘ownership’ of the past, exploring the work of Pedro Henríquez Ureña and the Mexican *Ateneo de la Juventud*: a group of intellectuals who worked ‘at the margins of the Western world and in a region in which the Graeco-Roman classics were not part of an established educational tradition’.³³ As Andújar shows, despite (or perhaps because of) their seeming disconnection from the traditions of classical scholarship and appropriation, the *Ateneístas* staked a remarkable claim on the ancient world, once which had a profound impact on Mexican literature and culture.

Despite the diversity of subjects chosen by contributors to this volume, common threads – and reasons why ‘extreme’ classics deserves our attention – are becoming increasingly clear. ‘Extreme’ receptions of the ancient world have consistently been the means for transgressive and vital identities to take shape; so-called marginal claims on the classical often have a much more significant impact than ‘central’ ones. As Hardwick puts it, ‘the comparative marginalisation of classics, decoupled from its associations with established norms and elites, has actually facilitated its capacity to promote thinking about crises and change’.³⁴ But one key question is now apparent: How can we define with any certainty what counts as ‘extreme’ classics? What counts as a ‘marginalized’ reception, and a ‘marginal’ figure – and who gets to make that judgement? ‘Extreme’ for whom?

‘Extreme’ classics is, in fact, a moving target: what is normal in one cultural context may be radical in another; positions which might have seemed extreme a few decades (or months) ago seem less so today; different readers (and scholars) may see the same character as

either unambiguously marginal or solidly central, radical or conservative. Of course, some characters did experience a shifting of their status during their lifetime, due (among other factors) to social mobility, whether positive or negative. Stead explores the case of Joe Guy, a Durham miner, who (unlike Hardy's Jude) was 'welcomed ... within the high walls of academic study'.³⁵ My own chapter traces the curious case of Daniel Dunglas Home, a spiritualist who experienced Victorian society as both insider and outsider: dining-companion of royalty one day, national joke the next. But status and centrality could also – and this is a fundamental concern for many contributors to this volume – be a matter of perspective.

In many circumstances (though by no means all), the distinction between 'central' and 'marginal' receptions, when carefully examined, turns out to be not just problematic, but unhelpful. As Andújar notes, the 'marginal' *Ateneo de la Juventud* was also capable of marginalizing others, led as it was 'by a group of educated and well-connected young men: at no point did they discuss the inclusion of women or other oppressed social or ethnic groups'.³⁶ 'Extreme' is always a subjective judgement. Many contributors discuss the difficult choices involved in making those judgements, as scholars of classical reception. Those on the so-called periphery often claimed ownership over the classical texts which those at the centre perceived as their own³⁷ – and reading positions which might be seen as 'extreme' from a traditional academic standpoint can unlock profound insights into ancient texts. As Andújar argues, regarding the *Ateneístas*: 'The swift manner in which these educated men at the "periphery" assumed ownership of European ancient texts raises questions regarding their presumed marginality. This case study reminds us that today's scholars should exercise some caution in automatically assigning the label "extreme" or "marginal" to readers or audiences in a non-European context.'³⁸ None of this is to deny the reality of repression and marginalization: as already discussed, this was very real, and very sharp. This is, rather, an argument about the judgements which we as scholars make about our material. Just when a figure seems to be pinned down unambiguously as 'central' or 'marginal', something slips, there is a shift in perspective, an awkward cough from the back of the room, and the story looks very different. The most revered figure always has the potential to become an object of scorn; the most neglected artefact, a sacred prize.

Take the case of a rather sorry-looking mummy, gathering dust next to a two-headed calf and a three-eyed pig, in a museum in Niagara Falls. The mummy stayed there for over a hundred years – until it was identified as Ramses I. Events then took a turn: the mummy was dusted off, put on a flight back to Egypt, met at Cairo with an honour

guard, draped in the Egyptian flag and installed in pride of place in Cairo's Egyptian Museum. But it was still the same mummy that had featured in the great Canadian freakshow, for over a century.³⁹ The perspective is all.

In the histories of scholarship, the greatest sin is sometimes *lèse-majesté*: to suggest that, from a certain angle, a 'great' scholar was not so great after all, or had a ridiculous side, or indeed a revolting one. Yet this is to write an artificial stability into the boundaries between centre and margins, appropriate and inappropriate receptions, disciplined and undisciplined classics. From one perspective, for Klause, Aphra Behn was 'a barber's daughter' – from another, she was 'on familiar terms with artistic and literary figures such as John Dryden'.⁴⁰ From one perspective, for Wallace, Julia Margaret Cameron 'was an outsider', without a formal classical education – from another, she was 'connected to the most elite literary and artistic culture first in Calcutta and later in London'.⁴¹ Neither perspective cancels out the other. Our inclination to clean up, or 'normalize' the narrative should be resisted. Of course a pioneering archaeologist was a master of the con.⁴² Of course a great scholar dabbled in psychic research. Of course much of our knowledge of the ancient world is built on the remarkable work of (to modern eyes) some remarkably prejudiced people. Why would it be otherwise? This isn't simply to argue that remarkable insights can emerge from deeply damaged and compromised individuals – rather, to argue that those remarkable insights sometimes emerge because of, not in spite of, the damaged and compromised nature of the people in question. Marginality, misdirection and repression – sometimes parasitical on equally challenging ancient material – can be engines of knowledge. Sometimes, it's only the liar in the gutter who can see the stars.

One might think that, in consequence, we should be highly cautious in seeking to label receptions of antiquity as 'extreme' – but perhaps it is the other way around. Arguably, classics is always-already *in extremis*. Billings has discussed 'the dialectic of absence and presence that antiquity cannot but evoke'.⁴³ For him, classical reception is the business of wanting what you can't have: *in extremis* by its very nature. The implications of adopting this perspective – and seeing uncertainty, longing and absence at the heart of all acts of reception – are explored, in different ways, by many contributors. For Wallace, Cameron's photographs of 'Sappho' find productiveness in uncertainty: they were 'both self-consciously aware of the medium – the inadequate illusion of the prop as lyre – and yet also resisted the medium by suggesting that some meaning or Hellenic character was withheld'.⁴⁴ Andújar shows how Pedro Henríquez Ureña, in his play *El Nacimiento de Dionisos* (The Birth of Dionysus), 'attempts to copy an

absent text which does not exist ... Henríquez Ureña may be also seen as posing various important questions about the afterlife of classical texts and particularly whether they can be reconstructed in modernity'.⁴⁵ Laura Jansen traces the uncertain identity of the protagonist of Borges's short story, 'The Maker' (1960): 'From the outset, the man strikes us as oddly familiar: he could be a figure of cultural importance, even perhaps an ancient Greek, although we cannot yet ascertain his identity.'⁴⁶ It is only gradually that we (and he) come to understand that he is Homer. Uncertainty, ambiguity, even absence becomes, here, a productive force: a strength, not a stumbling-block, of classical reception.

This pushes us towards a wider perspective, which is one of this volume's central arguments: that classical reception is structured by a battle between recovery and erasure, reinvention and preservation, plunder and guardianship. Each interpretative community's ancient world – each version of the 'classical' – is born from such a battle. The great scholar's battle for truth must share space with the great forger's battle for profit; the textual critic with the shameless looter; the hero with the villain. Reception – that is to say, the mechanisms by which the ancient world is preserved, valued and fought for – operates as powerfully through fragmentation and forgetfulness, as through remembrance. Forgetfulness and elision are integral to historiography, to the transformation of the past into sense and narrative. It is often because of, not in spite of, the presence of what cannot be recalled that ancient texts continue to be read. As Hardwick puts it: 'The repressions and silences in the modern writers are contrapuntal in their strategies of giving voices to those who are silent in the ancient texts.'⁴⁷ The classics are forever – echoing John Donne – 're-begot/Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not'. This, arguably, is how the 'classic' gets made.

The study of the ancient world has long been understood through loss and oblivion; for Niebuhr, it was a process akin to exploring 'an immeasurable city of ruins, of which there is not even a ground-plan extant'.⁴⁸ And this volume shows how writers have been active and canny players of the game of forgetfulness. Hardwick reminds us that 'memory, suppression and amnesia were recognised and explored by ancient writers too. Aeschylus voiced the issue through Cassandra's final words: "A watery sponge wipes out the picture at a stroke" (*Agamemnon* 1300)'.⁴⁹ In eighteenth-century Britain, David Garrick's *Lethe* (1740) was a wildly popular staging of the conflict between memory and forgetting. A procession of regretful eighteenth-century comic characters invades the ancient underworld in search of oblivion – they beg for a drink from the waters of Lethe:

The Wife at one Draught may forget all her Wants,
Or drench her fond Fool, to forget her Gallants;
The troubled in Mind shall go cheerful away,
And Yesterday's Wretch, be quite happy to-day;
Obey then the Summons, to Lethe repair,
Drink deep of the Stream, and forget all your Care.⁵⁰

There is the poet who longs to forget his critical reviews; the old man who longs to forget that he will die; the sweet young couple who long to forget that they ever got married in the first place. Predictably, forgetfulness – or rather, the staging of repression – goes awry. The old man who longs to forget that he will die, as he cannot bear to be parted from his money, ends up forgetting his money; the young couple forget their lovers rather than their spouses; the fine gentleman, with an opinion on everything, forgets everything.⁵¹ Garrick's celebration of oblivion can only be given shape, paradoxically, through (the audience's) remembrance of the ancient world, and of the myth of Lethe. Here, just as for Walter Benjamin, remembering and forgetting are not opposites but an 'intertwining, a crossroad, a junction'.⁵² At this crossroads, classical reception takes place.

This volume argues for a decentred model of classical reception: where accepted hierarchies of access to the past, and authority over it, are questioned and come under strain; where 'marginal' and 'central' cannot always be told apart. If classical reception is always-already *in extremis*, caught between presence and absence, then perhaps the truly problematic category is not the 'extreme' classical reception, but the 'central' one. One might wonder: Central for whom? Do we, as classicists, see ourselves as occupying the centre – or as entitled to define it? What kind of distortions might such assumptions be producing – both in research and in pedagogy? Stefani Dixon, who presented at the 'Classics *in extremis*' conference, from which this volume arose, considered the ways in which 'readers of the classics *in extremis* are not only located "elsewhere," but also consist of many current students at American or British universities'. Dixon's research, conducted jointly with Djesika Ilèn Watson, focused 'primarily on classics majors at an urban American university, CUNY Brooklyn, who are experiencing or have experienced long-term crises – primarily homelessness, physical or sexual violence, and chronic illness. Brooklyn College, a low-cost public university, consists largely of poor, first-generation students of color. 82% receive financial aid, and over half of all students are Pell eligible'. Dixon and Watson found that these students were able to

develop a 'classical imagination' that not only rejects classics'

reputation as a subject of the elite, but in fact involves students *in extremis* claiming a privileged relationship to classical texts on the very basis of their marginalization. As one student expressed for example: ‘Who’s really going to understand the *Aeneid* better? An Ivy League student living in a dorm, or me? I’ve actually experienced having to flee from my home country after violent disaster, I do think that gives me a special perspective on Aeneas.’⁵³

This points to a fundamental unanswered question at the heart of classical reception: in tracing the history of encounters with the ancient world, we often reckon with everyone’s subjectivities apart from our own. Dixon and Watson realized that classical reception happens to us, too: we cannot avoid co-equivalent implication in its discourses, along with the subjects of our research. Reception has been framed, both by Martindale and by the reception theorists on whom he draws, as an alternative to fixed meanings and positivist methodologies: ‘an alternative approach to the positivistic modes of interpretation (with their teleological assumptions).’⁵⁴ Yet in terms of how classical reception is practised, this fluidity is widely subordinated to a highly objective, positivist model of historiography. Scholars – including myself – claim to be able to recover not just the works, but the intentions of playwrights, authors, filmmakers. *We can*, runs the implicit argument, *recover the objective facts about this subjective claim on the past*. The reception history of texts is seen as a riddle to be solved.⁵⁵ Martindale, considering Dante reading Virgil, condemns scholars of Latin literature who see their own values reflected in Virgil.⁵⁶ But he then constructs a Dante who sounds (to this reader) very much like a late-twentieth-century literary theorist (‘Dante focuses on something analogous to what Marxists would call “contradictions”’) ⁵⁷ and a Titian whom Derrida might approve of, a painter of ‘category confusion’.⁵⁸ Martindale resists, eloquently, the pull of a positivist reading of Virgil – but in so doing, does not banish the positivist methodology, but displaces it onto Virgil’s later receptions. Having insisted that Virgil’s motivations and emotions cannot be recalled, he marks them up for Dante, who ‘was apparently so perturbed by the line in *Aeneid* 6 (376)’.⁵⁹ Or, as Jauss puts it, ‘it becomes possible for the later interpreter to reconstruct the preconceptions of the original addressee, even after the passage of a period of time’.⁶⁰ This rhetoric looks very different from reception’s initial promise of a radical subjectivity, or Derridean *différance*, which would unlock ancient texts. Reception’s current methodology is nowhere near as radical or as fluid as it might at first appear.⁶¹ To open up the polyvalency of an ancient text, it is obliged to turn that

text's later receptions into (relatively) fixed points in time and space – a singular 'Dante' reading Virgil – whereas reception history shows us that there are as many different ways to read Dante reading Virgil as there are to read Virgil himself. Reception, in other words, implicitly and consistently sites the contemporary scholarly perspective at the 'centre' of its discourse, and maps its 'margins' outwards from there. But of course, 'we' cannot stand aloof: classical reception happens to us, too.

This 'centre' cannot hold. Classical reception cannot afford to choose discipline over diversity. If it is to fulfil its potential as a field, it cannot simply aim to effect a land-grab – a radical expansion of the material which falls under the discipline of 'classics' – but must also come to terms with the obligation of finding different ways of understanding that material. Acknowledging marginalized voices from previous centuries must be paired with an acknowledgement of equally marginalized voices, today – and an awareness of the time-bound nature of our (my) own scholarship. Yet if this radical fluidity is to be accepted, what ground is left to stand on? This is a puzzle Martindale reckons with unsuccessfully in *Redeeming the Text*: 'In the end (indeed at the beginning) we have no choice but to interpret.'⁶² Contributors propose a number of provisional ways through this dilemma – notably Jansen, who offers the model of Borges's classicism: 'a globalizing – yet intensely *centreless* – image of Greece, Rome and the classical tradition'.⁶³ For Jansen, Borges 'understands Graeco-Roman antiquity to exhibit an intrinsically cross-cultural element, which has the potential to proliferate in space and time in multiple ways and directions, thus problematizing any claim to the "legitimate" borders of its tradition'.⁶⁴

This 'decentred' classics acknowledges the limits of all attempts to claim authority over the past, including our own, and the time-bound nature of all accounts of the ancient world, including our own. It embraces diversity over discipline, in both the subject matter it addresses, and the voices it listens to: not simply as a political position, but as a statement about how classical discourse has always operated. As the following chapters explore, no-one has ever been able to build an impregnable wall around the classics: there will always be cracks in the façade, shifts in power – and opportunities to tell a different kind of story. And as Wallace argues, looking differently may bring rich rewards: it 'opens up the boundaries between authority and subversion, between supposed authentic classical feeling and unabashed belated modernity, we can re-think definitions of classics and classical reception and explore a wider and more diverse notion of our relation with antiquity'.⁶⁵ This volume hopes to challenge the way you write and experience classical reception – the voices you listen

out for, and the ways you respond to them. As Petsalis-Diomidis puts it, it has ‘the potential to broaden the social and ethnic range of subjects we can hope to study as classicists ... The emerging polyphony across the social and cultural spectrum arguably has a direct relationship with the range of audiences we can hope to address today’.⁶⁶ This is a classics which listens to different voices, however alarming; which understands the ways in which unfamiliar perspectives may yield profound insights. It is a classics which draws life from its fragility – a classics inescapably, joyfully *in extremis*.

CHAPTER 2

THINKING WITH CLASSICAL RECEPTION

CRITICAL DISTANCE, CRITICAL LICENCE, CRITICAL AMNESIA?

Lorna Hardwick

It has become a truism that Greek and Roman texts and contexts are ‘good to think with’ and that those processes underpin and justify the continuation of a central role for classical material in modern aesthetic and intellectual life. Thus, in spite of the marginalization of knowledge of antiquity, both in education and in contemporary cultural frameworks, classics even if itself *in extremis* has a continuing cultural significance. I would take this further and argue that the comparative marginalization of classics, decoupled from its associations with established norms and elites, has actually facilitated its capacity to promote thinking about crises and change. I shall ground the discussion in examples from the work of three contemporary writers who have made extensive use of classical material: Margaret Atwood, Colm Tóibín and Derek Walcott. Each writer, in different contexts and through different literary and dramatic forms, has engaged with ancient authors and the themes of repression and revealing, memory and forgetting to explore their own cultural histories as well as those of antiquity.

The first part of this chapter starts from the claim that using ancient material as a field for experiment and thought adds a critical distance to the aesthetics, histories and hermeneutics of its subsequent receptions. There are many examples of ways in which classical material has been used to provide a context for exposing and probing contemporary issues, for example in societies in which political and artistic censorship prevails and in which ways have to be found of introducing critique ‘under the radar’. However, there is a downside to this in that these instances (however urgent and important in their own terms) can attract an implicit moral approval that embeds complacency about the dynamics of the relationships between ancient

and modern.

Thus, the nature and implications of this 'thinking with antiquity' need further investigation, especially in the sometimes fraught contexts of the 'pull and push' in the temporal and spatial relationships between ancient, mediating and contemporary perspectives. Sebastian Matzner has described this tension between alterity and identity in terms that bring out both the historic centrality of Greek and Roman material in Western cultural hegemony and its potential as a site of resistance to social and political norms: 'Throughout Europe's cultural history, the reception of classical antiquity is marked first and foremost by the intrinsic ambivalence of it being at the same time the foundation *and* the Other of contemporary cultural identity. It is, as it were, the resident alien at the core of western civilisation.'¹

Some recent examples of classical receptions are 'interventionist' in the sense that they use classical material as a spring board for contemporary social critique, using allusion, analogy and allegory. Bringing ancient and modern together in that way can be interpreted as validating the cultural politics and authority of the ancient material.² However, deeper analysis reveals complex interrelationships. For example, in her wide-ranging Introduction to the edited collection of essays *Dionysus since 69*, Edith Hall pointed to the associations between the reawakening of interest in Greek tragedy in performance and the 'seismic political and cultural shifts marking the end of the 1960s'.³ She discussed a number of contributory causes, including the breakdown of post-Second World War ideological assumptions and intellectual paradigms, the flexibility of the Greek texts for adaptation in a variety of contexts and causes, and the transferability to different genres and theatrical spaces of their performance aesthetics.⁴ In my own contribution to that volume, I suggested a threefold model for the process of political engagement that Greek tragedy was experiencing: self-emancipation from closed appropriation or association with any one class or ideology; achievement of civic participation in new contexts; creation of a space in which to develop politically and culturally.⁵

Reviewed from a wider perspective and with the advantage of hindsight, that particular swing of the pendulum can be seen as rebalancing perceptions of the role of antiquity and its receptions, both in sustaining cultural hegemonies and as a catalyst for paradigm shifts. In some situations of *extremis*, the aesthetic and intellectual authority of antiquity has been invoked in ways that pull in other, and less, liberal, directions. These include attempts to justify modern practices by association with an ancient 'foundation myth', for example, in Italian fascism in which Mussolini's cult of *romanità*

invoked a 'distant model' of ancient ancestry for his building programme and his fostering of a 'new' Latin literature. He attempted to emulate Emperor Augustus, creating an imitation of the *Res Gestae* to ensure his future reputation.⁶ In Germany, Prussian militarists and later the Nazis appropriated the ancient model of Spartan education and values.⁷ More recent struggles occurred in Greece in the military dictatorship of 1967–74 when the Colonels' regime tried to redefine and exert 'ownership' over Greek antiquity, selecting and permitting those aspects that could best be invoked to legitimize the regime.⁸

Although the contexts vary, the feature common to all these examples is the aim of creating shared perceptions about antiquity that legitimized the attitudes and behaviour inculcated by dominant social and educational institutions (in those contexts, of the fascist and national socialist dictatorships). The ancient past was invoked to create a form of cultural memory, merging myth, mimicry and aetiology to justify the values and practices of the present. The recreation of the classical past to fit with the ideology of a regime is not confined to overtly totalitarian regimes. Invocations of antiquity have been central to liberal and working-class rhetorics of education and social reform⁹ and to the gender politics of twentieth- and twenty-first-century popular culture.¹⁰ The imaginative recreation of Greek and Roman material has been a potent thread in the transmission of literary and artistic cultural traditions, including their deployment as countercultural voices.¹¹

This densely woven and highly contested web of cultural and political forces that define themselves through (or sometimes against) a recreated classical antiquity raises immediate questions about the selections made by subsequent authors and scholars. Considerable work has been done to identify and explain shifts from Greece to Rome and vice versa as the shaping force in later periods and traditions¹² and to map the prominence of particular authors and texts at moments of efflorescence, invention and crisis.¹³

In this chapter I aim to refocus the lens away from selection and inclusion and instead to examine the significance of the exclusions and alterations made by receiving writers. I should emphasize that I am not taking the ancient text as an authoritative arbiter of value (whether aesthetic, ethical, epistemological or a combination of all three) but rather positioning it as a comparator in order to identify the shifts in culture and values that are revealed and can (sometimes) be explained by analysing the changes. My approach recognizes the importance of the ancient text, myth or historical narrative and the classical scholarship associated with it and puts these at the centre of reception debates, but without permitting them to dictate what is allowable or not in subsequent reworkings of the material. I have

therefore avoided using the term *contaminatio* as its traditional meaning in respect of ancient literature has acquired a different set of associations: as the English language has changed ‘contamination’ insinuates a pejorative judgement. My discussion will be developed in phases through case studies which are separate but linked in ways that will (I hope!) both point to a broader canvas and help to nuance the provisional judgements that will emerge.

My discussion of differing responses by modern authors includes case studies of adaptation of controversial episode in Homer’s *Odyssey*, using those contrasts to probe how reception of classical poetry and drama can become an agent in shaping cultural memory, in redefining relationships between past, present and future and – crucially for this discussion – in providing a stage for modern societies to recognize the traumas of the past without being destroyed by them. The themes of revenge and desire for justice and how these are perceived in different contexts provide a linking thread. Texts such as Homeric epic and Athenian tragedy have very long biographies; their sometimes paradoxical persistence through iterations and mutations is a cultural positive that energizes both the ancient and the modern versions.¹⁴

In terms of exploiting insights offered by theory, my focus on repression and erasure is framed by two especially significant interrelated conceptual fields. These are the notions of cultural capital and of social and cultural memory. At the end of this chapter I shall include a brief comment on how the reception of classical texts offers a distinctive contribution to critique and expansion of these fields.

Bourdieu’s *habitus*: From cultural capital to social capital and back again

In his study of how the Roman poet Horace was embedded in Victorian male elite education Stephen Harrison has commented that familiarity with Horace ‘consistently served as a means by which members of that elite and those who aspired to belong to it, engaged (consciously or unconsciously) in self-definition and self-fashioning’ and that as a means towards this they appropriated and manipulated Horace’s works ‘with various degrees of creativity in all forms of literary reception in this period’.¹⁵ Harrison goes on to categorize this as an example of ‘cultural capital’, as conceptualized by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.¹⁶ Bourdieu associated education and inculcation of cultural capital with the state of *habitus*, the deeply engrained habits, practices and dispositions shared by those who have cultural experiences in common. According to Bourdieu these norms of expectation, understanding and behaviour underlie the material and

symbolic power that is, in part, created and legitimized through culture.¹⁷

This chapter is concerned with the more recent contributions of Greek and Roman material in cultural capital. The conditions that promoted the familiarity with Greek and Roman material displayed by at least some members of the Victorian elite discussed by Harrison have subsequently been adapted and transformed. The content and core knowledge associated with concepts of cultural capital and its social expressions has changed. So far as classical aspects are concerned, antiquity's place at the centre of elite education and culture has receded but access to some kind of knowledge of antiquity has been opened up to all social classes through improved access to education, translations, museums, galleries, theatres and film.¹⁸ Although detailed knowledge of texts and histories may be (even) less prevalent than in the nineteenth century, perceptions about antiquity have broadened and have privileged more generalized associations – for example, of Homer with war poetry, of Antigone as a freedom fighter, of Achilles as a gay icon.¹⁹ Those perceptions may exist in the public imagination alongside or instead of detailed knowledge of the contours of a text.

Modifications in antiquity's contribution to cultural capital are also evident if Bourdieu's sister concept of 'social capital' is reviewed. Social capital includes the shared networks of education, institutions and understanding that provide cultural glue and in which the texts, ideas and figures of antiquity can provide both ballast and challenge. Changes at all levels have marginalized classical subjects from their central role in elite education and to a considerable extent removed them from mass education.²⁰ This means that the role of Greek and Roman material in cultural capital and social capital is modified and transmitted via different kinds of institutions and learning processes; there are new kinds of 'classical education' and these are not necessarily or even primarily the provenance of an elite. Theatre, film, TV, radio, popular fiction, video games and other modern media are dominant cultural vehicles for the transmission and re-imagining of Greek and Roman myths, famous names and social, political and military history.²¹

The cultural spaces provided by theatre (both elite and community) are notable in that respect and have facilitated and encouraged the interaction between material and imaginative aspects of social and cultural capital. Tragedy in performance has added a critical edge to cultural capital in its different situations worldwide.²² This has been particularly so in moments of crisis, in which live theatre has provided a field for working through the challenges of social and religious change, war and suffering and desires for justice and revenge,

sometimes by distancing these in terms of setting and narrative. The persistence of key aspects of human experience in all times and places means that the ‘mythological’ themes of tragedy retain their ‘connecting’ force while the plasticity of myth allows them to be adapted to the situations of different times and places. Thus, certain plays re-emerge in different times and places – for example, Euripides’s *Women of Troy* in the aftermath of war when the focus is on victims, or Sophocles’s *Oedipus Tyrannos* when a society is caught between the need to engage with its past and yet is reluctant to do so (see below).

In addition, because of their sensitivity to profound suffering and pain, Greek tragedy and Homeric epic have been used in therapeutic programmes in hospitals and in the community, especially those aimed at war veterans.²³ Significantly, such programmes do not assume prior knowledge of the texts and narratives but link them with other aspects of participants’ life experiences, with the aim of drawing out and transforming awareness of self and others. Therapeutic projects aim to palliate the effects of individual and social trauma by invoking distant ancient figures and narratives to help sufferers to recognize their own situation and to be reassured that they are not ‘weak’ or marginalized but rather linked to the heroic figures of antiquity.²⁴ The model is thus an inverse one to the examples of repression and social amnesia that will be considered later in this chapter and is testimony to the hermeneutic flexibility of the plays.

So far as political institutions are concerned, acquisition of a classical education is no longer a *sine qua non* for the elite, although it retains a cachet that has been exploited extensively in political rhetoric in the United States and in a more superficial way by a few contemporary politicians in Britain.²⁵ However, classical texts are still used in international leadership training programmes and in military academies to inform understanding of more modern ideas and to provoke debate. For example, in 2005 the Fellows of the Africa Leadership Initiative discussed Jean Anouilh’s rewriting of Sophocles’s *Antigone*,²⁶ while Thucydides’s *History of the Peloponnesian War* has been regarded as a foundational text in the teaching of International Relations and in Military and Staff College training.²⁷ All these instances indicate that Greek and Roman material is still recognized as being ‘good to think with’ and retains some footing in cultural capital. In some of these political contexts, the classical presence can be seen to be edging towards that of the (Socratic) gadfly.²⁸

Antiquity, memory, denial and recognition

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, staging of Greek plays in

the original, in translation and as adaptations has been a feature of conflict in diverse political situations and their aftermaths worldwide, notably in crises in Argentina, Egypt, Greece, Ireland and South Africa.²⁹ In Germany in the years following the rise and fall of the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s and the progressive collapse of Soviet domination in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in the late 1970s and 1980s, Greek tragedy and epic poetry provided a lens through which spectators and readers could contemplate the past and their part in it. Erika Fischer-Lichte has analysed how changes in the predominance of particular tragedies in post-war German theatre acted as a marker for stages in the national willingness and ability to recognize the human abyss of the past. She pointed to Karl Jaspers's 1946 essay 'Die Schuldfrage' (The Guilt Question), which addressed the issue of guilt.³⁰ Jaspers drew a distinction between individual and collective guilt, arguing that individual guilt was derived from actions for which the individual was responsible, while collective guilt assigned moral responsibility to wider society. According to Jaspers's concept of collective guilt, all those who had helped the Nazis exercise power, by voting for them or by keeping complicit silence about atrocities they would have known about, shared in guilt.³¹

Commenting on the significance of Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannos* at that time, Fischer-Lichte suggested that

Intentionally or not, these performances of *Oedipus the King* during the first post-war years helped theatre-goers ... to come to terms with the relapse into barbarism in the Third Reich and with the part they had played in it – even if they themselves did not commit any crimes subject to criminal law. Oedipus [sc. the man who only gradually recognises his guilt] spoke to those who had become 'guiltlessly guilty' ... more easily reconciled them to the idea of their collective guilt. ³²

It was not until the 1960s that *Oedipus* gave way to *Antigone* as the play of choice in German theatre. That could be interpreted as a signal that public consciousness became able to engage with arguments about resistance. It also marked a shift in perceptions of the objects of resistance. These changed from the Nazis to the Soviet dominated regime in East Germany. In the context of the Cold War, in December 1982, the project ANTIKE-Entdeckungen (Discoveries of Antiquity) staged three Greek tragedies and one comedy on a single day, under the name of a 'Theatre Festival in Praise of Peace'.³³ The symbol of the festival was a huge sculpture of a (Trojan) horse with the word ANTIKE painted on it. The sculpture was placed in front of the theatre, symbolizing the power of Greek plays to smuggle ideas into

the public realm.³⁴

The impact of the event was intensified when it was preceded by Christa Wolf reading from her novel *Cassandra*. This novel had originally been the fifth in a series of ‘Lectures on Poetics’ that Wolf delivered in Frankfurt in 1982 on her return from travelling in Greece. It was subsequently revised and expanded for publication (initially in German, 1983). The opening sequence of the novel has Cassandra reflecting in a first person narrative on her life experience: ‘I am testing for pain. I am probing my memory in the way that a doctor probes a limb to see whether it has atrophied. Perhaps pain dies before we die? That information, if true, must be passed on; but to whom?’ (11) Wolf’s portrayal of agonizing dilemma was central to that of a post-war Germany that had to rebuild from the shadows of military defeat and of guilt for the Holocaust. It was also – as has subsequently emerged – central to her repression of her own complicity with the Stasi (secret police) to whom she provided information during the Soviet domination of East Germany.³⁵

Remembering and dis-remembering

Recent scholarship has broadened the scope of memory studies to include recognition of the importance of classical material in what is a broad-based interdisciplinary field that includes contributions from the humanities, social sciences, media studies and cognitive science.³⁶ The notion of ‘new memoryism’ is helpful as a conceptual tool. The term provides a literary counterpart to the notion of ‘new traditions’ which was coined by social historians to conceptualize ways in which new social practices that provided social ‘glue’ in changing situations could be explained and legitimized by being given an ‘ancestry’ in previous practices and traditions.³⁷ The term ‘new memoryism’ has been used to describe ways in which new writing uses classical material. Authors (ancient and modern) and readers who are familiar with earlier material join in a kind of co-authorship, creating new narratives and ways of looking at the world that are anchored in a shared (albeit constructed) memory of the classical and/or mythological past.³⁸ They in their turn extend this co-authorship of the past by bringing in a new cohort of readers to join a mythological narrative that functions as part of a continuously evolving text. The new author/translator/adaptor takes on a decisive agency in that process.³⁹ Indeed, the poet and translator Josephine Balmer has described herself as a ‘translator-protagonist’.⁴⁰

However, not all participants wish to remember. The figure of the fifth century BCE tragedian Phrynichos is frequently invoked as an example of a playwright who was fined for creating a play that

referred to a recent trauma (the fall of Miletos) and thus reminded the Athenians of their own woes.⁴¹ The concluding part of this chapter will move from Fischer-Lichte's focus on the use of classical material as an agent of *remembering* the recent past and turn the focus on the *disremembering* of classical material as a means of disremembering the more recent past.

If the pieties of classical humanism lull our curiosity to sleep, the company of the ancient authors keeps it alert.⁴²

Questions about the possible causes and effects of repression in modern works that respond to ancient texts dig deep into the relationships between cultural memory and cultural amnesia (truly, classics *in extremis*). Memory, suppression and amnesia were recognized and explored by ancient writers too. Aeschylus voiced the issue through Cassandra's final words: 'A watery sponge wipes out the picture at a stroke' (*Agamemnon* 1300). This is the reverse process from that adapted by Alice Oswald in her long poem *Memorial*, which used Homer's naming of minor figures killed in the *Iliad* as a spring board for linking biographies and similes to recuperate them in the history and sensibility of lament, creating a 'kind of oral cemetery'.⁴³ Oswald's poetic excavation of the *Iliad* brought to the surface what was latent. It compensated for ancient suppression. In the examples I shall cite, modern writers suppress key aspects of the ancient texts, either by deleting them completely or by re-inscribing silence – an instance of 'the road not taken' by the modern author. These repressions differ both in the literary means used and in the contexts from which and to which they speak. Taken together, they expose faultlines and shifts in the tectonics of cultural capital.

As a tool to initiate this line of investigation I have chosen the theme of Orestes's revenge, a *topos* in ancient texts and in their modern receptions. Orestes has become an emblem of the cycle of revenge in the myth of the House of Atreus – his killing of his mother Clytemnestra as revenge for her killing of his father Agamemnon (which in its turn was Clytemnestra's revenge for Agamemnon's sacrifice of her daughter Iphigenia at Aulis to gain a fair wind for Troy). The story features in Homer's *Odyssey*, in which Orestes is cited as a role model for Telemachus. There, the target is Aegisthus and the action is praised as a sign of heroic virtue, a young man's defence of the interests of the father:

Consider deeply how you might be able
To kill the suitors in your halls – by tricks
Or openly ...
You surely heard how everybody praised

Orestes when he killed the man who killed
His famous father – devious Aegisthus.⁴⁴

Subsequently, references to Orestes's killing of Clytemnestra appear in fragments of Hesiod and Stesichorus. The extant plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides deploy Orestes's role in the myth in various ways – in Aeschylus's trilogy *The Oresteia*, Sophocles's *Electra* and Euripides's *Electra*, *Orestes*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris* and *Andromache*. There is an allusion to a contemporary portrayal of Orestes in Aristophanes's comedy *Acharnians* (1166–8) and lost tragedies by Latin authors are thought to have dramatized aspects of the story. Robert Miola has traced ways in which the Greek playwrights drew on earlier versions of the associated myths and examined how they created 'new images and ideas for the future' that were transplanted into very different contexts in early modern literature and drama.⁴⁵ Key issues that were taken up in the later re-imaginings included the struggle of conscience in deciding between loyalties to male and female parents, the social and religious implications of vengeance, especially if that involved matricide, Orestes's madness and issues of further retribution that ensued. From this web of associations two aspects stand out in the treatment of Orestes in modern rewritings – the role of the Furies in seeking justice for Clytemnestra and the nature of the eventual conflict resolution that was dramatized by Aeschylus in the third play of his trilogy, *The Eumenides*.

First, the Furies in the Greek imagination and the way in which they have come to be associated with calls for justice that spread out into other classical receptions: for example, in Margaret Atwood's reworking for theatre of the story of Penelope, *The Penelopiad*, she anachronistically adds to the Homeric context by giving a prominent place to the invocation of the Furies by the Maids who have been hung by Telemachus as punishment for their sexual relationships with the suitors:

MAIDS: We demand justice!
We demand retribution!
O Angry Ones, O Furies, you are our last hope!
Be our defenders, we who had none in life!⁴⁶

The invocation is in vain – the closing scene of the play depicts the Maids as acting almost like Furies in Hades, where Penelope is unable to escape them. A stage direction describes how 'the Maids titter eerily, bat-like, and circle away from her'⁴⁷ and Penelope is forced to confront her past and admit what she sees: 'Their still-twitching feet don't touch the ground.' Atwood has the Maids equate justice with retribution but she also, through the character of Eurycleia, voices the

tradition found in many modern translations that the Maids were in part to blame for their own demise: 'The suitors fancied them they let it go to their heads.'⁴⁸ In her Translator's Note and Introduction to the *Odyssey*, Emily Wilson points out that Homer does not label the slaughtered women with any derogatory language. In terms of the values of the society depicted in the poem, Homer had no need to do so, as they were the property of Odysseus and thus tainted by the theft and sexual use made of them by the suitors.⁴⁹ The change in translators' choice of words came about when different social norms prompted qualms about regarding slaves/women as property. The norm shifted to one of blaming them for their own predicament (and thus by implication retrospectively sanitized the Homeric episode from offending modern sensibilities).

Such shifts are one reason why the hanging of the Maids has become a contested *topos* in modern receptions. The implications go beyond women's status to the issue of slavery as a whole. This leads not only to questions of justice and retribution but also to categories of remembering, disremembering and social amnesia. Peter Oswald 'solved' the problem of the hanging of the Maids episode by omitting it from his staged version and published text of *Odysseus*, which ends with the recognition scene between Penelope and Odysseus, followed by a closing Chorus that invokes the contrast with other post-Trojan war events, including the killing of Clytemnestra and its aftermath:

Now Orestes with his sword
Cuts his mother from the world,
Shudders in the cringing hills.⁵⁰

In Derek Walcott's *The Odyssey: A Stage Version* (1993), there was one serving maid, Melantho. In the closing sequence of the play, Penelope was not confined to the upper-room as in Homer, but emerged as a morally dominant woman, accusing Odysseus of turning the house into an abattoir and challenging Odysseus and Eurycleia when they wanted the maid to be hanged.⁵¹ In the staged play, Melantho was played by a black woman and doubled with Nausicaa, thus highlighting the impression that innocence was being abused.⁵² Walcott subsequently commented that his decision to alter that aspect of Homer's narrative was made because the situation resonated with the history of slavery and its treatment of human beings as chattels for exploitation, as workers and as sexual property. The episode in the play was thus subsumed in his broader analysis of cultural value:

In the New World servitude to the muse of history has produced a literature of recrimination and despair, a literature of revenge written by the descendants of slaves or a literature of remorse

written by the descendants of masters ... The tough aesthetic of the New World neither explains nor forgives history. It refuses to recognise it as a creative or culpable force.⁵³

Walcott's rejection of revenge and retribution in literature and politics has a profoundly aesthetic hinterland. In his long poem *Omeros* there is an imaginative exploration of the ancestry of his central character Achille, who is the descendant of slaves abducted from Africa and transported across the Atlantic to the slave plantations of the Caribbean (the Middle Passage).⁵⁴ In a sequence that adapts the classical trope of the *katabasis* (descent to the Underworld and encounter with ancestors), Achille sees the past from the standpoint of the present.⁵⁵ Grappling with memories, half-memories and a sense of alienation that is expressed in nausea (141) he is unable to engage directly with it or with his ancestors, who have forgotten him and his given name: 'He foresaw their future. He knew nothing could change it' (146).⁵⁶ Walcott's poetical strategy in this part of the poem resonates with the language of memory that has strong affinities with threads in the *Aeneid*, in which Vergil blends the poetry of remembering and forgetting as the exiled Trojans come to terms with the need to build a new future. Readers of Vergil's poem, ancient and modern, find resonances with the Augustan present and the emergence from civil war.⁵⁷ In *Omeros*, Walcott as narrator comments of Achille that 'He was his own memory' (141) and in an overtly Vergilian passage:

Achille nodded

The tears glazing his eyes, where the past was reflected
As well as the future.⁵⁸

The active rejection of revenge finds a different expression in Yael Farber's play *Molara*.⁵⁹ The play, which has toured extensively internationally, was central to Farber's engagement with the processes of building the future in post-apartheid South Africa.⁶⁰ In her play Farber adopted a different approach to that of Walcott in his 1993 adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey*. Walcott addressed the problem of the past (slavery) by giving the poetic and musical narrative voice to Billy Blue, positioning him as the inheritor of the role of the Homeric bard. That meant Walcott could excise the hanging of the Maids without also excising the historical reality of slavery. He avoided representing slaves as 'victims' but put African-Caribbean voices as agents of their own cultural liberation. Farber wrote in a situation in which apartheid and the associated atrocities were fresh in the minds and lived experiences of the present and took a different route to enacting liberation. She explored the notion of 'testimonial theatre', which she

characterized as a genre in which people bore witness to their own stories 'through remembrance and words. Material culled from memory is crafted into a compelling yet true narrative, which is then brought to life through text, performance and the visual devices of the theatre. The essential component of this genre lies in its capacity for healing through speaking, hearing and being heard'.⁶¹ In terms of performance aesthetics this approach is perfectly compatible with that of Walcott in his stage version of the *Odyssey*. The difference lies in the performance context and the distinctive frame this provided externally and internally to the play. Farber's play resonated with the aims and mode of operation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and when she adapted the *Oresteia*, Farber framed the play as a quasi-hearing of the TRC, presenting the dramatic action as testimony delivered to an on- and off-stage audience.⁶²

In her prefatory comments to the published text and in the Programme Notes to the performance in Oxford in 2007, Farber explained her choice of the *Oresteia*. She wanted to create a work that

explores the cycle of violence and the compelling human impulse for revenge. It was on reading the ancient *Oresteia* Trilogy that I felt the potency of the classic texts as metaphorical vehicles for expressing complex contemporary reality ... *Molara* is an attempt to grapple with the drive for revenge – and a celebration of the breaking of the cycles of violence by the courage of the 'ordinary' man.

In taking her inspiration from Aeschylus's trilogy (and Sartre's modern response *Les Mouches* [The Flies]), Farber made significant changes and omissions. By using the frame of the testimonial hearing, she was able to accommodate a participatory audience on-stage and, most important of all, to omit the final play in the trilogy, *The Eumenides*. Although in Aeschylus *The Eumenides* provides a court-based resolution to the problem of the cycle of revenge and rids Orestes of the Furies, it does so in by using means that are not likely to influence modern audiences: a *deus ex machina*, a rigged vote, marginalizing of female suffering and matricide because of a noxious combination of gender hierarchy and political pragmatism. In transforming the Areopagus court of Athens into a TRC hearing, Farber also transformed the values embedded in *The Eumenides*.⁶³ Suppression of the third play in the trilogy actually had a liberating effect on the aesthetic and values of the adaptation. Farber's determination to write a conflict-resolution play that eschewed revenge provided a counterpart to Walcott's poetic and theatrical determination not to be constrained by the nexus between receptions of Homer and memories of slavery.

The Eumenides has continued to be a problematic area for modern responses to trauma and conflict resolution. Colm Tóibín's 2017 novel *House of Names* is based on the story of the House of Atreus, retelling the events of the *Oresteia* and (like Alice Oswald in *Memorial*) also excavating the silences of the ancient text and its associated myths. Tóibín makes Orestes reflect on the psychology of his mother Clytemnestra and her collaborator Aegisthus:

Yet all day she and Aegisthus enacted their fiction. If they could keep us from reminding them of what they did, then they could live in a world of their own invention. They wanted silence.

Colm Tóibín, *House of Names*⁶⁴

In a review of the novel, Alex Preston identified the paradox that although there is little anachronism and 'everything in the novel glows with the special radiance of antiquity', nevertheless it both adds to and excludes from the trilogy.⁶⁵ The novel explores what happens in the diegetic spaces, the off-stage moments and the unarticulated feelings of Clytemnestra, Electra and Orestes. Orestes's exile, return and the ensuing matricide open up a coda that ignores the Furies and Aeschylus's strategies in *The Eumenides*. The closing sequence of Tóibín's novel is like an imperfect cadence, unresolved and yet leaving the way open for a different theme in the future. There is no trial, just an almost imperceptible slide into a marginalized existence. However, it is an existence that allows a different future. Orestes's wife Ianthe gives birth to a child of unknown parentage (the result of rape), and this symbolizes the breaking of the cycle:

The dawn light, fuller now, more complete, as it always would be once the day began, no matter who came and went, or who was born, or what was forgotten or remembered. In time, what had happened would haunt no one and belong to no one, once they themselves had passed into the darkness and into the abiding shadows.⁶⁶

Modern scholarship has explored how Vergil in the *Aeneid* 'elevates the therapeutic effects of forgetting into one of its explicit themes'.⁶⁷ The 'therapeutic effects of forgetting' are given a different perspective via the repression of *Eumenidean* resolutions of conflict by Walcott, Farber and Tóibín and their replacement by other outcomes and cadences that resonate both with Vergil and with the situations that the modern writers address. Restorative justice comes forward to take the place of retribution. The repressions and silences in the modern writers are contrapuntal in their strategies of giving voices to those

who are silent in the ancient texts. The new texts recognize in ways that subtly differ from the ancients the complexities and nuances of what is remembered and disremembered.⁶⁸

The examples I have discussed indicate that classics *in extremis* is more able, rather than less able, to operate in situations of trauma, in social, moral and political *extremis*. The move away from cultural centrality that Greek and Roman material has experienced has modified and in significant ways enhanced its contribution to shifts in what might be regarded as ‘cultural capital’. In operating at ‘the edge’, classics has helped to redefine the edge. Most’s insight⁶⁹ that ‘Aeneas has to forget his past in order to remember his future’ begins to read like a metaphor for Greek and Roman texts and those who work with them. The editor of this volume has pointed out to me how ‘Remember to forget’ is a common theme in memory studies and suggested that the examples discussed in this chapter point rather to a positive role for erasure and ‘forgetting’ as a mode of reconstituting memory, including envoicing those who might otherwise have been forgotten because they left no trace in the public record. It is a nice cultural irony that the classical texts that used to be associated with social, racial and political repression have moved once again to the centre as agents of restorative understanding. Equally, the webs of omission, erasure and metamorphosis that this entails also serve to remind us of the darker sides of the ancient texts that we might otherwise have preferred to forget.

CHAPTER 3

DAPHNIS TRANSFORMED

APHRA BEHN'S POLITICS OF TRANSLATION

Amanda Klause

The early modern poet, novelist, playwright and translator Aphra Behn (1640–89) defies easy categorization. Extremely popular in her own day, she was accepted in the elite literary circles of Restoration England. Although not much is known about her early life, it seems likely that she was the daughter of a Kentish barber named Bartholomew Johnson and that she spent some of her formative years in Surinam with her family. She apparently married a London merchant of Dutch descent named Behn in the mid-1660s, but separated from him shortly thereafter. After a brief stint in the Netherlands as a spy for Charles II during the Second Anglo-Dutch War, Behn began to earn a living as a writer in London. She was the author of extremely popular plays, including *The Forc'd Marriage* and *The Rover*, though she is perhaps best known for her novel *Oroonoko*. She was on familiar terms with artistic and literary figures such as John Dryden and Thomas Otway, as well as John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester.¹ But how did the daughter of a barber receive the education that enabled her to become so prolific a writer? It is clear that Behn herself felt that there had been gaps in her training. During the period in which John Dryden translated the *Aeneid*, Behn openly lamented her ignorance of Greek and Latin. Yet she undertook to write about Classical literature; Dryden himself published her paraphrase 'Oenone to Paris' in his *Ovid's Epistles* (1680).² At once an outsider and a member of the literary elite, Behn challenges the centre/margin distinction which has often been implicit in studies of classical reception. Behn, marginalized by gender, class and education, obtained the authority to interpret the classics. In Behn's case, engagement with the classical past *in extremis* did not occur at a great remove from those more firmly established at the centre. On the contrary, her work contains evidence of her efforts to move into the

domains of her male peers and thereby to exert control over them. In order to establish this claim, I shall examine Behn's engagement with Virgil and Lucretius in her poem 'To the Unknown Daphnis on His Excellent Translation of *Lucretius*.'³

'To the Unknown Daphnis' was Behn's contribution to a series of commendatory poems printed in the second edition of Thomas Creech's translation into English of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* (1683). In her poem, Behn offers profuse thanks to Creech for making Lucretius available to a female audience barred from learning Greek and Latin. Behn writes: 'Till now, I curst my Sex and Education/And more the Scanted Customs of the Nation,/permitting not the Female Sex to tread/the Mighty Paths of Learned Heroes Dead' (24–8). She later claims: 'Thou by this Translation dost advance/our Knowledge from the State of Ignorance/And equall'st us to Man' (41–3). On the basis of such lines, scholars have attempted to flesh out the picture of female reading practice in the early modern period.⁴ What is often missing from such discussions is the acknowledgement that Behn positions her poem vis-à-vis previous literary tradition with great erudition. Indeed, her deep engagement with the classical tradition belies her purported ignorance. Behn is not just a passive (if grateful) recipient of Creech's literary bounty. She is a cunning and active (re)interpreter of Creech's *De rerum natura*.

In order to explore Behn's agenda in this poem, I shall focus not only on her understanding of Lucretius, but on her reception of ancient pastoral. In its address to 'Daphnis', the title of her commendatory verses signals her preoccupation with pastoral tropes. Beginning with Theocritus, of course, Daphnis appears as an archetype of the shepherd-singer. But the logic of the name's appearance in Behn's title requires explanation. Hers is the only commendatory poem in the collection that does not address Creech by his own name in its title. Why should Behn choose to cast Creech as an 'Unknown Daphnis' when she must surely have known his identity? Does a translator of Lucretius particularly deserve this distinction? 'To the Unknown Daphnis' does not make clear whether Behn drew 'Daphnis' from Theocritus or Virgil.⁵ To some extent, this ambiguity does not signify much. Daphnis, in both Theocritus and Virgil, is a mythic shepherd-singer who appears in several different guises. It may be that Behn was aware of Creech's intentions, following his work on Lucretius, to publish a translation of Theocritus's *Idylls* (1684). However, comparison with Virgil's 'Daphnis' has the potential to be particularly fruitful. Both Behn's Daphnis and her Virgilian model are constructed as adaptations of an older poetic tradition into a contemporary form, and, as such, are interventions in an established discourse.⁶

In particular, I shall examine the libertine and Epicurean qualities of Behn's *Daphnis*. The Lucretian elements in Virgil's *Eclogues* help to explain why Behn associated the translator of Lucretius with *Daphnis*, and why 'translation' is at the heart of her poem's meaning.⁷ Furthermore, I suggest that the anonymity afforded by the moniker *Daphnis* allowed Behn to cast herself as a 'Daphnis' figure analogous to the translator Creech, a move calculated to demonstrate her own creative prowess as an individual and as a woman. Far from displaying female passivity as a reader of translated verse, Behn's poem serves as a model of how women denied access to the 'original' versions of classical texts could assert their ownership over them through creative reinterpretations of translations.

Daphnis, libertinism and the practice of translation

Behn's characterization of *Daphnis* is, in one significant respect, very different from either that in Theocritus or Virgil. Her *Daphnis* is 'Unknown', a young man at the beginning of his career, not the mythic originator of pastoral music that he is in the work of the ancient pastoralists. Instead, it is Behn's portrayal of 'Strephon' (the pen name of one of the most infamous libertines of the period, John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester) that directly recalls descriptions of *Daphnis* in both Theocritus and Virgil. In the prototypical scene of mourning for *Daphnis*, the gods, animals and nature lament the shepherd together.⁸ The description of Strephon's mourners in Behn's work contains a similar trope: 'For whom the Muses mourn, the Love-sick Maids/are languishing in Melancholly Shades; the Cupids flag their Wings, their Bows untie' (91–2) and 'By murmuring Brooks the Careless Deities are lay'd,/Weeping their Rifled Power now noble Strephon's dead' (96–7). The idea that 'Love-sick Maids' would pine for Rochester is of particular interest. *Daphnis*, from his first appearance in Theocritus, was associated with the world of amorous encounter; the shepherd died because of a struggle with Eros (*Id.* 1.95ff). That Rochester should attract the interest of Love-sick Maids, however, was also appropriate because of his professed libertinism.⁹ Libertinism was a movement based upon ideas of radical individual freedom. The libertines wished to undermine dominant political, moral, religious and sexual norms, but are perhaps best known for their promiscuous (and transgressive) sexual exploits and bawdy poetry.¹⁰ This is the tradition in which Behn believes that her *Daphnis* will follow.¹¹

Perhaps because her 'Daphnis' is young and unestablished, Behn feels that it is in her power to direct his career: he will follow in the footsteps of Rochester, a former 'Daphnis' himself. She proclaims: 'No

sooner was the fam'd Strephon's Glory set,/Strephon the soft, the Lovely, Gay and Great/But Daphnis rises like the Morning Star' (107–9). In these two lines, Daphnis becomes the heir of an androgynous libertine. The language used to describe Strephon/Rochester strongly recalls that which Behn used earlier to describe Creech's translation, when she had claimed: 'The Mystick Terms of Rough Philosophy/Thou dost so Plain and Easily Express,/Yet Deck'st' em in so soft and Gay a Dress,/So Intelligent to each Capacity;/That They at once Instruct, and charm the Sense,/With heights of Fancy, Heights of Eloquence,/And Reason over all unfetter'd Plays./Wanton and undisturb'd as Summers Breeze,/That gliding Murmurs o're the Trees' (45–53).¹² The phrase 'Strephon the soft, the lovely, Gay and Great' recalls the formulation about the philosophy that was adorned in 'so soft and Gay a dress.'

But it is not just the single verbal echo that establishes Creech as a libertine. The language throughout this passage is sexualized. The word 'Wanton', for instance, recalls the sexual promiscuity characteristic of the libertines. Furthermore, Behn's notion that in Creech's translation Lucretius's reason 'unfetter'd Plays' directs us towards a notion of performance characterized by rather reckless abandon. Scholars often think of 'libertine' behaviour in terms of performance. In *Performing Libertinism in Charles II's Court*, Webster observes that: 'libertinism was performed in at least three ways [by male libertines like Rochester] the libertines were actors who captivated spectators with their scandalous behaviour ... playwrights who embodied their own reputations in their libertine protagonists; and through their activities and play ... texts to be analysed, interpreted, and evaluated'.¹³ There may be a pun here linking Behn's 'Play' and the type of scandalous performance that Webster describes.¹⁴ Most important, however, Behn implies that Creech has feminized Lucretius's verse by adorning the originally 'Rough' philosophy in 'so soft and Gay a Dress.' Cross-dressing was a favourite activity of many self-proclaimed libertines, including Rochester himself.¹⁵ By associating Creech with sexual libertinism, Behn does not simply make an observation about his sexual proclivities, she speaks of his practice as a translator.¹⁶

The idea that a translation could be 'libertine' was in vogue during the Restoration. The notion of 'libertine translation' may be thought of as a metaphor made possible (and comprehensible) by the existence of sexual libertinism. The metaphor is not wholly superficial. Libertine writing and libertine behaviour share certain characteristics: opposition to traditional authority, a rhetoric about the importance of freedom and an affinity for 'play'. In his 'Preface Concerning Ovid's Epistles', the poet and translator John Dryden distinguishes between several 'types' of translation: metaphor, paraphrase and imitation.

The first 'slavishly' turns the original 'word by word, and line by line, from one language into another'. The second 'denotes the politics of latitude ... the original author's words are "not so strictly followed"'. The third, imitation, 'assumes the liberty not only to vary from words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion'.¹⁷ Dryden, for safety's sake, chose to employ the second method himself, since the third, the most 'libertine' of the strategies outlined, risked erasing the original altogether. Despite Dryden's rejection of the imitative method, the idea that the translator might imitate the original author occupied a prominent place in his discourse.

Not all translators shared Dryden's scepticism about the third method. Behn's contemporary, the poet and translator Abraham Cowley, characterized word-for-word translation as a 'vile and unworthy kind of Servitude', opposing it to 'anything that is good or noble'.¹⁸ Unlike Dryden, he identifies no middle ground between metaphor and imitation. Cowley couches his defence of loose translation in the language of sexual freedom: 'It does not at all trouble me that *Grammarians* perhaps will not suffer this libertine way of rendering foreign Authors, to be called *Translation*'.¹⁹ When Behn claims, therefore, that Creech feminized the *De rerum natura*, she implies that he has not been an entirely faithful translator. Creech's translation practice appears 'libertine' in the sense that it does not entirely 'faithfully' reproduce the terms of the poem.²⁰ According to Behn, his rather loose imitation of Lucretius seems actually to have endowed the philosophy with an analogous freedom, signalled by phrases like 'Reason ... unfetter'd Plays' and 'Wanton and undisturbed'.

This last phrase heightens the association of the translation with libertinism in another way. The word 'Undisturb'd' points towards the Epicureanism espoused by the proponents of libertine behaviour. 'Undisturb'd' might well be Behn's translation of the Lucretian notion of *ataraxia*, the ideal form of Epicurean pleasure that provides peace and tranquillity.²¹ It has become a commonplace that Epicureanism endowed aristocratic libertinism with its *raison d'être*.²² As Reid Barbour points out, the hedonism exhibited by members of Charles II's court was 'engendered by the notion that by the materialistic view of frenzied and destructive nature, rife with ... busy and voluptuous atoms ... [and by the notion that] if God is not dead, He is certainly ailing, so conventional morality does not apply'.²³ Behn could easily have been attracted by Lucretian atheism. In fact, 'To the Unknown Daphnis' originally contained a reference to 'poor Feeble Faith's dull oracles', but the publisher changed the phrase to 'as strong as Faiths resistless oracles' (56).²⁴ Epicurus freed his disciples from the fear of the gods encouraged by conventional religion, instead inviting them to

experience pleasure in his garden.

The *locus amoenus* evoked by Behn's language might subtly refer to this garden of pleasure. Natural features figure prominently in her poem. In addition to the 'Summers Breeze,/ that gliding murmurs o're the Trees' (52-3), Behn later calls to the reader's attention 'murmuring Brooks' (96) by which deities recline. She ends her praise of Creech hoping that 'shady Groves, and Banks of Flowers,/The low reposing Beds of Grass/Contribute to thy softest Hours' (136-9). That the translator of Lucretius should (according to Behn) inhabit an idealized garden and employ libertine methods thus seems entirely appropriate. It should be said that Behn is not simply displaying her familiarity with classical thought when she places Creech/Daphnis in an Epicurean setting. I shall argue that her introduction of Epicurean tropes into the poem has the effect of undermining Creech's authority as translator and of putting Behn herself at the 'centre' of contemporary discourse about the significance and meaning of the classical past. In order to establish how this is so, it will be necessary to examine Virgil's treatment of Daphnis and his association of that figure with Epicureanism in the *Eclogues*.

Interlude: Virgil, Lucretius and Epicurean approaches to translation

Behn's decision to cast her 'Daphnis' as an Epicurean in some sense mirrors Virgil's own choice in the *Eclogues*. And Virgil's engagement with Epicureanism via Lucretius raises issues about translation similar to those that concern Behn. Virgil, like Behn, often places his Daphnis in a *locus amoenus*. At the opening of the seventh *Eclogue*, for instance, Daphnis appears reclining under an ilex (1). He informs Meliboeus, 'huc ipsi potum venient per prata iuveni,/hic viridis tenera praetexit harundine ripas/Mincius eque sacra resonant examina quercu' (here the young bulls themselves will come through the meadows to drink, here the Mincius has covered the green banks with tender reed, and the throngs from the sacred oak resound) (11-3).²⁵ In the space of a few short lines, Virgil manages to introduce several features of the *locus amoenus*: a water feature, green banks, trees and charming noises. These natural features are reminiscent of the highly artificial (but lovely) gardens of Virgil's era. Frederick Jones has suggested that the 'space' of the *Eclogue* world structurally echoes these 'gardens-as-art', noting that 'artificiality, benignity, order, and anthropocentricity of such areas, the importance of woods and streams, and the literary allusiveness all recall the landscape of Virgil's *Eclogues*'.²⁶ Although Jones does not really explore this possibility, the 'garden' Virgil

depicts might also recall Epicurus's famed garden.²⁷ Certainly those who spend time in the garden experience pleasure. Meliboeus, for instance, asserts: 'posthabui tamen illorum mea seria ludo' (I held my business second to their play) (17) in order to observe the amoebian contest between Corydon and Thyrsis. If the garden is meant to recall Epicurus's, Virgil has admittedly exercised a great deal of license. Epicurus surely would have disapproved of his garden's transformation into an artificial haven for poetry. But this fact does not invalidate the notion that Virgil borrowed the trope. Virgil elsewhere transforms Epicurus to suit his poetic project.

In the fifth *Eclogue*, Daphnis takes on a particularly Lucretian sheen in Menalcas's song. Menalcas informs us that Daphnis 'loves *otium*' (61). A few lines later, Menalcas obliquely makes reference to the *De rerum natura*. When he sings 'deus, deus ille, Menalca' (a god, that one was a god, Menalcas') (64), he paraphrases, as scholars have long noted, Lucretius 5.8: 'deus, ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi' (a god, that man was a god, noble Memmius).²⁸ In Lucretius, the poet exclaims that Epicurus was a god. Virgil posits that a poet (Daphnis) is a god. In so doing, Virgil plays with the irony that Epicurus himself rejected poetry.²⁹ Virgil tendentiously recasts Lucretius's Epicurus as a shepherd and a poet. It is his written poetic medium that allows Virgil to thus transform Lucretius and Epicurus.

The phenomenon of Epicurus's reappearance as the poet Daphnis is closely related to the fact that Virgil is 'translating' Daphnis into his Latin poetry. As Suzanne Mizera cogently reminds us, 'Daphnis' rebirth amid the landscape of Lucretian poetry and philosophy marks him forever after as a Roman divinity, no longer uniquely Greek'.³⁰ Daphnis in Theocritus can have no relation with Lucretius; Virgil has made an important addition to his character. The original 'Daphnis' in Theocritus bears some resemblance to his later counterpart, but Virgil's 'copy' is not entirely faithful. It would seem that this very fact is at least partly related to a Lucretian view of language. Lucretius claimed that human speech grew out of gestures and that the meanings of words were a matter of social contract: 'varios linguae sonitus natura subegit/mittere et utilitas expressit nomina rerum' (but nature drove them to send forth the various sounds of the tongue, and utility formed the names of things) (5.1029–30).³¹ As Serres explains, 'for linguistic atoms, as well as for the letters of matter, a given element placed here or located in such and such a vicinity is not the same as the same element elsewhere and in a different context or structure'.³² Translation therefore poses a problem. A translator living in a given society might not understand the intended meaning of an author living in an entirely different social setting.

As is well known, Lucretius himself announces his difficulty in

translating Epicurean philosophy into Latin. He struggles to translate Anaxagoras's concept of *homeomeria* into poetic Latin (1.830–3). Lucretius finds that even a transliterated Greek word does not make sense in Latin unless it is more fully described in metaphorical terms, of which the reader cannot be entirely sure Epicurus would have approved. Lucretius's Latin claims to be only an approximation of Epicurean language. In light of such considerations, language appears quite contingent. Virgil capitalizes on language's transiency in the fifth *Eclogue*, where the Virgilian Daphnis both resembles and is foreign to the Theocritean Δάφνις. The lines 'Daphnis ego in silvis, hinc usque ad sidera notus,/formonsi pecoris custos, formonsior ipse' (I am Daphnis in the woods, known all the way to the stars, the guardian of the handsome flock, myself even handsomer) (43–4) make reference to a number of different works. On one level, they echo Theocritus 1.120: Δάφνις ἐγὼν ὅδε τῆνος ὁ τὰς βόας ὧδε νομεύων (I am that Daphnis, the man who cares for the cattle), but Virgil has changed the line somewhat by including the more Lucretian word *silvis*.³³ Virgil may also be invoking Homer. The phrase 'hinc usque ad sidera notus' may be intended to emulate *Odyssey* 9.20: καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει (and my *kleos* reaches heaven).³⁴ If this is the case, Daphnis would play the additional role of Odysseus, a figure whom the Theocritean Daphnis does not imitate. These words are intended as Daphnis's epitaph, ostensibly to serve as his eternal commemoration. But Virgil shows us that the written word is subject to appropriation by later readers. As Brian Breed argues, 'if that sort of stability is one function of writing, the allusions in these lines point also to writing as a vehicle for displacement and relocation; the words of Homer and Theocritus are "physically transposed" to use Julia Kristeva's term, into Virgil's text and onto Daphnis' tombstone'.³⁵ An utterance removed from its original context by quotation can undergo a semantic change. Virgil's Daphnis is not the same as Theocritus's, despite the fact that his name has merely been transliterated into the Roman alphabet. These lines, therefore, point to the limits of authorial intent and control over the printed word. I shall make clear that although Behn does not specifically refer to these Virgilian passages, she holds similar views about the instability of the written word and translation.

Epicurean translation, Restoration England and the female reader

Early modern English poets shared an understanding of language's contingency similar to that of Virgil.³⁶ Lucretian materialism and the

analogy between letters and atoms informed their thinking. According to Lucretius, even language has a material basis. Words are composed of letters which are like atoms (1.823–9).³⁷ Lucretius even refers to letters as *elementa* (1.824), which combine in various sequences to form different words. Goldberg points out: ‘this is not merely a verbal connection in *elementum*. It is rather based on the fact that ... when analysed materially, atoms and letters are basic elements ... not only because all words are made of letters, but because letters themselves, as material objects, are made of atoms’.³⁸ Therefore, words are created by the same uncertain Lucretian ‘swerve’ of atoms (2.219) that causes all matter to collide and create new material forms. This essentially implies that words come together on the basis of chance, in the same way that sense ‘arises from the senseless repetition and reproduction from chance encounters’.³⁹ When translation occurs, atoms can combine in surprising ways. It follows then, as Kroll asserts, that for early modern intellectuals translation becomes a ‘provocative and typical neoclassical figure’, because it raises the questions ‘whether and how we can assemble the components of knowledge into a coherent ... body or facsimile thereof ... [and] how we can begin to communicate those elements to others – to make them public’.⁴⁰

By casting Creech as a translator of a proponent of a materialist doctrine, Behn plays with some of these ideas in ‘To the Unknown Daphnis’. Her prefatory poem undoes the ideological work Creech hopes his translation will perform, calling into question the notion that Creech has really assembled a ‘coherent’ body of knowledge (i.e. one that has a singular and particular message). As noted earlier, Behn’s poem appears in the second edition of Creech’s translation of the *De rerum natura*. In the first edition, which contained far fewer commendatory poems, Creech presented the reader with a preface that is openly hostile to Epicurean philosophy. He wrote that he translated Lucretius only because ‘I have heard that the best Method to overthrow the Epicurean Hypothesis (I mean as it stands opposite to religion) is to expose a full system of it to publick view’.⁴¹ He implicitly criticizes Epicurus’s supposed hedonism: ‘I have endeavored faithfully to disclose his meaning, show him whole, and entire, unless in the Fourth Book, where some Verses are omitted for Reasons obvious enough’ (7). This preface does not appear in the second edition. However, Creech’s views do not seem to have changed in the year since the first edition. In a letter to his ‘highly esteemed friend George Pitt’, included in the prefatory materials, Creech rails against Epicurus: ‘Epicurus knew this very well when he baited his book with pleasure, and appealed rather to the loose affections of the debauched, than the reason of the sober.’⁴² Both volumes were accompanied by scores of anti-Epicurean notes.⁴³ Yet Behn ignores the fact that Creech

‘endeavored faithfully to disclose’ Lucretius’s meaning and instead emphasizes his ‘libertine’ translation methods.⁴⁴ Furthermore, in the lines following the passage in which Behn rails against the custom of her country, she complains that ‘ravishing thoughts’ are not allowed to ‘approach our ear’ (16). The implication is that Creech’s translation has rectified that problem because of its scandalous Epicurean sentiments.⁴⁵

Creech surely would not have approved of his depiction as a libertine.⁴⁶ Behn’s Daphnis does not seem to be a good imitator of the man. Behn’s contradiction of Creech’s religious orthodoxy is made possible by the fact that authors in the early modern period had relatively little control over the publication of their books.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Goldberg emphasizes that the rise of printing in some sense privileged the copy over the original: ‘the original, the parent, serves only to ensure the life of the child, the printed copy ... we have to sacrifice the singular for the sake of the plural’. These multiple copies increase the ‘possibilities of misreading and incomprehension’.⁴⁸ Behn could ignore the reading of Lucretius that Creech suggests in his prefatory material, precisely because his printed preface and explanatory notes were not all-authoritative, just as Virgil advertised that he had the power to create a new Daphnis because the Daphnis preserved in Theocritus’s writing was not static in the first place. Changing notions regarding the authority of the written word and of the author in early modern England, then, led to a set of circumstances favourable to those interpreting the classical past *in extremis*. Behn, a woman speaking merely from the paratextual margins in her commendatory poem, could lay claim to an interpretative authority at least equal to that of Creech himself.

Furthermore, Margaret Doody claims that the preponderance of prefatory material in early modern texts was sometimes associated with parodic humour: ‘Prefatory material, which includes sub-titles, may often tease and puzzle us, alerting us in advance to a unique stylistic mixture ... The habit the Augustans cultivated, of prefacing poetic works with discussions of the work, becomes an object of parody by the Augustans themselves.’⁴⁹ It seems quite possible that Behn was mocking Creech for his conservative tastes in ‘To the Unknown Daphnis’. With the idea in mind that Behn’s purported admiration for Creech was mingled with a certain irony, let us re-examine Behn’s statement on her status as female poet and the grateful recipient of Creech’s bounty.

Behn writes that because she is ‘of feebl’r Seeds design’d’, her poetry is composed of ‘softer Love’ (8–10). Alvin Snider suggests that Behn’s claim to be composed of inferior atoms reminds the reader that ‘a passive ideal of femininity underlies her identity as a woman’.⁵⁰

Although Snider does subsequently admit a certain reversal of gender roles in the poem, his first proposition seems to overstate the case somewhat. Behn's description of her weaker atoms appears rather ironical.⁵¹ Far from advertising her passivity, Behn actively assimilates herself to the figure of Creech/Daphnis, the translator. In the lines following the 'feebler Seeds', Behn describes her own poetry in language that echoes her description of Creech's translation: 'I ... while the slow moving Atomes strove/With careless Heed to Form my Mind/Compos'd it all of softer Love:/In Gentle numbers all my Songs are drest' (8–11). The metaphor of poetry 'drest' is reminiscent of the terms in which we saw her describe Creech's poetry: 'The Mystick terms of Rough Philosophy/Thou dost so plain and Easily Express,/Yet Deck'st' em in so soft and Gay a Dress.' Both the metaphor of 'clothed' poetry and the notion of 'softness' are repeated. This might simply be an attempt to feminize Creech in order to mock him.⁵² However, I find that purely negative reading unsatisfying. By comparing her poetry to Creech's translation of Lucretius, Behn stakes her own claim as a kind of translatress.

Behn repeats the word 'drest' once again in the poem. In an apparent nod to Virgilian pastoral, whose shepherd Mopsus claims that he wrote his lament for Daphnis on a beech tree – 'cortice fagi carmina/descripsi' (I wrote these songs on the bark of the beech tree) (*Eclagues*, 5.13–14), Behn informs Creech of her hope that 'every bark' will be 'with thy Disticks drest' (129). This line is interesting because Behn, like Virgil, shows a preoccupation with the circulation of poetry in a written medium. Because technology allowed for the mass production of printed texts, Behn's hope that 'every bark' might one day contain Creech's verses is not entirely hyperbolic. One should not forget, however, that Behn's verses were printed together with Creech's (at least in the 1683 edition of them, as well as in a 1684 reprint). Her verses therefore already occupy some of the same figurative 'bark'.⁵³ The repetition of the trope of poetry as adornment further collapses the distance between Behn's and Creech's work and it becomes unclear to whose poetic output she actually refers. By virtue of this, Behn's poetry and Creech's translation exist on the same plane. She has even created something like a second translator's preface, with different instructions for reading *De rerum natura* from those of Creech himself. Perhaps the titular Daphnis is 'Unknown' because Behn would like to introduce the possibility that Creech is not the sole intended addressee of her praise.

But what might Behn claim to translate? On a basic level, she translates a Greco-Roman pastoral trope into English (as Virgil 'translated' Theocritus's Daphnis into Latin).⁵⁴ Furthermore, as we have seen, by virtue of her engagement with libertine Epicureanism,

she has transposed/translated Lucretian ideas in her commendatory poem.⁵⁵ If we take to its logical conclusion Behn's suggestion that she did not have the Latin necessary to engage adequately with the works of 'Learned Heroes Dead', she must also have been 'translating' Lucretius through Creech. But she has also translated Creech's vision of Lucretius and his project of translation into terms that suit her own purposes. In so doing she demonstrates her ownership over a classical tradition to which she had been barred access.

She uses the commendatory poem to make a political statement about female power. Early in her 'praise' for Creech's translation, Behn writes, 'Others long since have pauld the vast Delight,/In Duller Greek and Latine satisfi'd the Appetite' (22–3). The surface implication is that Creech's translation has provided Behn the novel opportunity to read Lucretius. On a second reading, the statement actually appears to denigrate Greek and Latin poetry by emphasizing its dullness.⁵⁶ This suggests that the English translation is superior to the Latin or Greek original.⁵⁷ Behn valorizes translation, but in doing so emphasizes that translation is rightfully the province of women. Men, she argues, do not fully enjoy translation because they are capable of reading the original. Since Behn figures herself elsewhere in the poem as a 'Daphnis' and a translator, she would seem here to suggest that she does so for the benefit of women. Her engagement with Creech's translation demonstrates to other women how they might freely read the Classics. And indeed in the next year, in a preface to her translation of Bernard Bovier de Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes* (Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds) (1684) Behn wrote: 'The Reputation of the Author ... the Novelty of the Subject in vulgar Languages, and the Authors introducing a Woman as one of the speakers of these five discourses, were further Motives for me to undertake this little work; for I thought an English Woman might adventure to translate any thing, a French Woman may be supposed to have spoken.'⁵⁸ Here again, Behn advocated the importance of the female translator *qua* female, as well as emphasizing the female translator's ability to do patriotic service for her country.

In her poem, Behn stakes a strong claim for women as both translators and readers of translations. In so doing, she usurps both Creech's role as translator and reinterprets his Lucretius. This forceful behaviour might qualify as what David Kramer has termed 'literary imperialism' in John Dryden's famed translations of classical texts. Kramer proposes that '[intentional] misquotation, poetic imperialism (what Dryden called "victory") and plagiarism are all aggressive, and in Dryden's view masculine, modes of acquiring the poetic or critical goods of others'.⁵⁹ In reinterpreting Creech's purpose in translation and the message that *De rerum natura* conveys, Behn mimics Dryden's

‘masculine’ strategy, but insists that she does so as a woman. Her example suggests how powerful a voice in the paratextual margins could be. A reader working her way in a linear fashion through the book containing Creech’s *De rerum natura* would encounter Behn’s commendatory lines before she began the translation. She would already have been influenced by Behn’s assessment of the poem’s libertine qualities, and perhaps inclined to search for its ‘ravishing’ sentiments herself. Behn’s example not only suggests to us how a reader denied a traditional classical education might creatively engage with the classical past, but how such a reader could reshape the reception of that past by others.

CHAPTER 4

LOCAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH ANCIENT GREEK VASES IN OTTOMAN AND REVOLUTIONARY GREECE, c. 1800–1833

Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis

Introduction

The theme of *Classics in Extremis* can be found in the reception of ancient Greek vases in Greece c. 1800–1833 in two ways.¹ First, in the turbulent and violent events of the time which included the Greek War of Independence of 1821, and the first few years of the new Greek State. Second, in its focus on the ethnic and social margins of the owners of classical culture, traditionally defined as elite and Western. In this chapter I explore evidence for engagements with ancient vases by local communities in Greece, including Ottoman Greek, Albanian and Jewish, across the social spectrum. For while Westerners engaging with vases at this time were typically elite, local engagements include the non-elites. The aim is to broaden the traditional focus on Western collectors as the creators of the classical canon of Greek vases to include locals who excavated, collected, sold or even purposely destroyed ancient vases. Such local engagements with ancient vases were distinctive not least through their spatial proximity to and visual familiarity with antiquities, in contrast to foreign visitors in Greece.

My analysis aims to deepen our understanding of the reception of classical materiality, building on recent research into alternative and local discourses about antiquities in the Ottoman Empire.² However, to date scholars have focused on architecture, sculpture and increasingly on inscriptions, while ancient vases remain unexplored.³ Classical archaeology in general has been resistant to approaches pioneered in classical reception studies, and vases suffer from two more specific handicaps. First, the traditional lower valorization of

vases as opposed to monumental sculpture is still deeply embedded in the scholarly discourses of classical archaeology, in the art market and in museum display strategies. Second, as we will see, ancient vases are also less visible in Greek discourses about antiquities, although I will argue that this does not reflect the reality of material presence on the ground.

A key interpretative method I apply to access the experience of local and non-elite engagements with these ceramics is a phenomenological and sensory approach. I explore the ‘texture’ and meanings of vases for local non-elites, who, crucially and distinctively, did not view them through the lens of Western neoclassicism, classical collections in Rome or classical texts. I also argue that these ethnically or socially marginalized engagements intervened decisively in the creation of the classical canon of art, side by side with the better-known activities of elite Western collectors. This investigation into an episode of reception of classical material culture, therefore, also has implications for our understanding of the corpus of Greek vases studied today.

My selection of evidence is indicative of the types of texts available: Greek documents referring to antiquities, mostly letters and official government papers;⁴ and publications and drawings by Western Europeans who visited or settled in Greece within the period c. 1800–1833.⁵ To date I have not found evidence for Ottoman Turkish engagements with ancient vases.⁶ This may be related to the relatively late development of Ottoman Turkish collecting of classical antiquities, reflected in the foundation of the first museum for antiquities in Istanbul, the Imperial Museum, in 1891, and in the enactment of legislation declaring all antiquities found to be state property and forbidding their export as late as 1906.⁷ It may also reflect a specific lesser interest in classical vases relative to other antiquities, and can be contrasted to the prominent visibility of *spolia* in the form of sculptures built into edifices which were at times protected by the authorities.⁸

While texts by foreign travellers can provide valuable evidence for non-elite engagements with ancient vases, they are by no means neutral. They offer observations from the outside, through the lens of elite classical education, and social privilege, which in some cases results in an orientalizing approach.⁹ While I reassess the significance of passages about, for example, ‘an Athenian husbandman ... wearing Albanian dress’¹⁰ and ‘a Jew of Corinth’,¹¹ there is an insurmountable gap between us and the voices of these nameless people. This is better acknowledged at the outset – the evidence allows us to go only so far *in extremis*.

Presence and visibility of ancient vases in Greece,

The nature of the evidence

Marble architectural and sculptural remains – ruins – were highly visible in daily life in Ottoman Greece, not only in public spaces but frequently built into domestic spaces. By contrast, ceramics, although very durable, were not generally visible in the outdoors because most were originally deposited underground in tombs, and once found, their lack of utility as building material, their small scale and often fragmentary state, militated against their reuse and consequent visibility. But it would appear that some vase fragments were visible at ancient sites: for example, Edward Clarke (1769–1822) who travelled around Greece in c. 1800 writes that in the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros ‘we saw also a little stone coffin, containing fragments of terra-cotta vases: it had, perhaps, been rifled by the peasants, and the vases destroyed, in the hope of discovering hidden treasure’.¹² The implication here is that the vases themselves were not considered of value by the local inhabitants.

Detailed evidence for the presence of ancient vases on display in buildings is hard to come by, not least because of the enormous destruction and violence suffered in Greece during the course of fighting in the 1820s. Known collections are those of Western Europeans who became resident in Greece, particularly the historian George Finlay (1799–1875) who fought in the War of Independence, and Georg Christian Gropius (1776–1850), consul of Britain and subsequently Austria, and founding member of the Archaeological Society of Athens in 1837.¹³ To some extent these cross the Western European/local divide, but they belonged, without exception, to the social elite. Evidence for antiquities in the possession of local inhabitants focuses on sculpture and inscriptions.¹⁴ A volume of seventy-four pencil drawings of antiquities in Athens belonging to the library of the Honourable Frederick North (1766–1827) (and therefore dated prior to 1817 when he succeeded to the title of Earl of Guilford) is a case in point.¹⁵ While this offers fascinating evidence for the presence of sculptures and architectural fragments in the houses of Greek families in Athens prior to 1817, the few vases which do feature are specified as being in the collection of Louis-François-Sébastien Fauvel (1753–1838), the French consul, collector and excavator (Figure 4.1).¹⁶ Should this be interpreted as evidence that Athenians did not collect vases even though they collected sculptures, or as evidence for the archaeological interests of the Honourable Frederick North who likely commissioned this document?



Figure 4.1 Pencil drawing from a bound manuscript in the library of the Honourable Frederic North, dated pre-1817; pyxis with figural decoration, entitled 'ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΦΑΥΒΕΛΟΥ. ΟΙ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΟΙ ΑΡΙΘ. Α· Β· Γ· Δ· Ε· ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΝΤΑΙ' 'From the [antiquities] of Fauvel. The following numbers: 1,2,3,4 are included', page numbered 7. By kind permission of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library.

Undeniably the high quantity of ancient ceramic vessels in Greece and Attica in particular, and the destructive and constructive building activity that took place from the 1820s onwards, must mean that ancient vases were frequently found by locals. The fact that these

objects were prized by foreigners and higher-status Greeks educated abroad is likely to have influenced reception by non-elites. There are also some positive statements in the sources about the display of ancient vases in buildings both at the top and bottom end of the social spectrum, which are discussed below. The texts chosen concern different areas of Greece and cut across the public/private and Western/local divide.

Display of ancient vases in official contexts

Consulates

In Ottoman Athens consulates were both official buildings and the private houses of collector-consuls such as the above-mentioned Fauvel and Gropius, and Spyridōn Khōmatianos Logothetēs (c. 1735–1815) representing Britain. While the presence of marble sculptures in these buildings has been recognized on the basis of visual and literary evidence, less attention has been paid to ancient vases.¹⁷ But an account of antiquities surviving in Athens, written in Greek by a ‘soldier in Athens’ in 1823 specifically mentions that ‘all the consulates are filled with busts, various vessels, lachrymatories of Greek women, in which they put their tears, and offered them to the dead, and in continuation buried them in the grave with the dead person’.¹⁸ In Fauvel’s house ancient vases together with objects from tombs were displayed in the study (Figure 4.2).¹⁹ Viewers of vase collections in the houses of consuls would have tended to be from the elite, both Western European and local. The presence of ancient vases in these semi-official spaces claimed them as valuable collectibles within a broader European national geography.

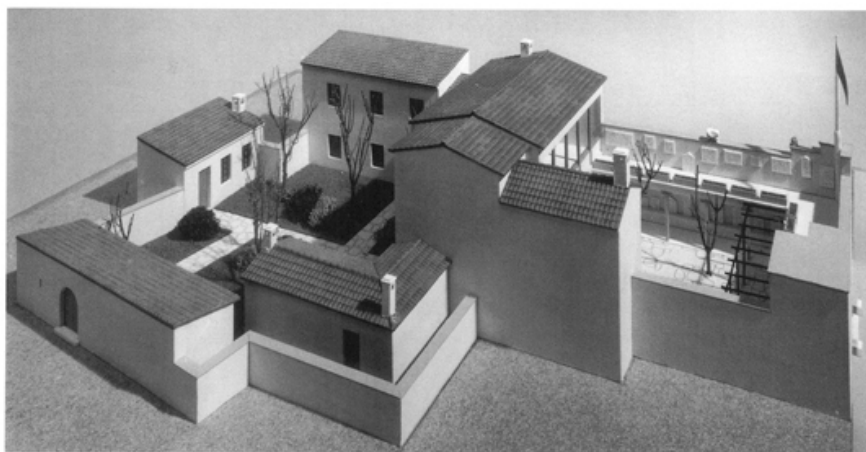


Figure 4.2 Model reconstruction of the house of Louis Fauvel in Athens. View from

The Kapodistrian orphanage in Aigina, first state museum

Ancient vases were part of the first state museum founded in Aigina 1828 by Ioannēs Kapodistrias (1776–1831), the first head of the new Greek state.²⁰ The museum was part of the Kapodistrian orphanage, but this appellation does not do justice to the extraordinary combination of functions in this institution, which comprised a refuge for several hundred children orphaned during the War of Independence, a printing press, library, training school for a variety of crafts such as book binding, woodwork and sewing, as well as the museum of antiquities.²¹ The whole institution was housed in a purpose-built neoclassical building designed by Theodoros Vallianos (1801–1857) on a simple ordered rectangular plan, with a church tellingly dedicated to God the Saviour of Greece on the central axis opposite the entrance²² (Figure 4.3). The volatile political situation created a highly tense, factional atmosphere culminating in the resignation of the first director of the museum Andreas Moustoxydēs (1785–1860) in 1831,²³ following Kapodistrias's assassination, alterations to the purpose of the orphanage in 1834, and the wholesale relocation of antiquities to Athens in 1837. The following is a description from 1832 by Ludwig Ross (1806–59), who was later to become the first *ephor* of antiquities on the Akropolis²⁴:

The second part of the museum is kept in the library. Here one finds a couple of small glass cabinets containing tomb lamps, lachrymatories, glass vessels, clay and metal paintings etc from the Aigina tombs and in some cases from Athens and Delphi. Two large repositories contain almost exclusively vases of various forms and sizes, adorned sometimes with flowing lines, sometimes with figural groups and other representations, a number of which are uncommonly beautiful and well-preserved.²⁵

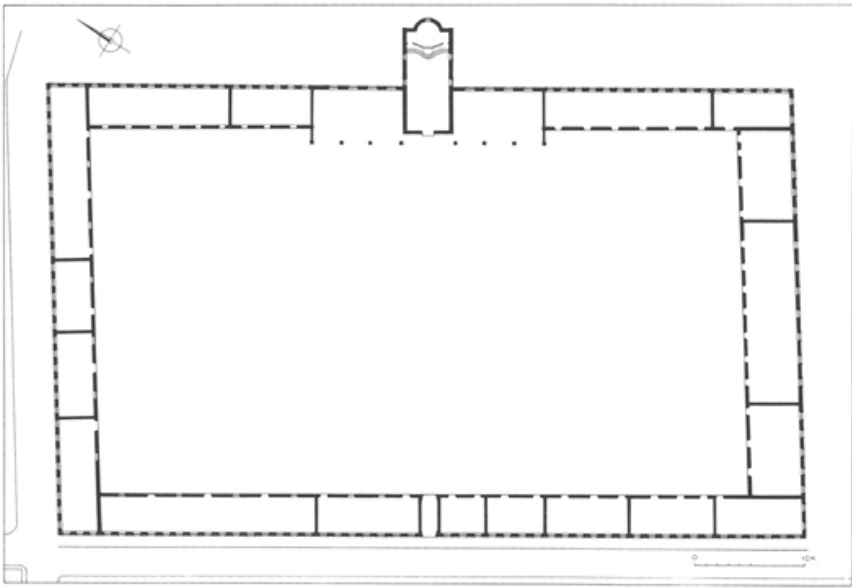


Figure 4.3 Floor plan of the Kapodistrian orphanage which also housed the first archaeological museum of Greece, built 1828 in Aigina. By kind permission of the Archaeological Society of Athens.

This room follows the Western European model of a connoisseur's library, displaying ancient vases and small-scale antiquities, often decorated with paintings of imaginary classical landscapes and myth. But unlike such spaces which offered escape into the fantasy of the distant Greek world, this room was in the real Greek landscape and was hung with modern paintings by Athanasios Iatridēs (1799–1866), the director of the museum from 1832 to 1834. These depicted and glorified brutal incidents of the War of Independence, such as 'The Death of Markos Botsarēs' (Figure 4.4). They combined styles of local Greek folk art with the traditions of naturalism developed in the Renaissance in Western Europe and ultimately traced to classical Greek art;²⁶ to the eyes of the German architect and painter Leo von Klenze, schooled in neoclassicism, they appeared 'really appallingly bad', when he visited in 1834.²⁷ But it must be surmised that their display near the ancient vases did not strike a jarring note with Iatridēs and other Greeks involved in the institution; this arrangement co-opted antiquities, including ancient vases, into the building project of the Greek nation. The room, then, created a visual context for the vases unlike any other to be encountered in Europe. The perception of ancient vases as building blocks of the nation can be traced in Moustoxydēs's encouragement of the revival of local ceramic production, in his lending of ancient vases as models for potters to use,²⁸ in his use of the term 'relics' both for antiquities and for the

children in the orphanage, and more broadly in Kapodistrias's decision to establish the museum within a pedagogical institution.



Figure 4.4 A. Iatridēs, ‘The Death of Markos Botsarēs’, ink painting, National Historical Museum cat. n. 4542-1. By kind permission of the National Historical Museum, Athens.

The museum room was set off the central open courtyard (Figure 4.3). But entry was restricted and indeed contested: Iatridēs himself had difficulty getting hold of the keys,²⁹ and in 1834 the overseer broke the lock to let Leo von Klenze in to see the collection.³⁰ But the museum room, visibly present and occasionally opened or indeed transgressed for important visitors, constituted a known entity to the orphans, disempowered through socio-financial status, age and the circumstances of bereavement. Here is evidence, then, for a socially marginalized group, living in close proximity to the first official state collection of classical antiquities, including ancient vases.

Private Greek possession of ancient vases

Moving into the private realm, I examine five texts referring to named Greek individuals in possession of ancient vases. While the first three men were of significant social status, the fourth man was skilled and there are no indications about the social standing of the fourth one. The documents about the latter three men are concerned with the

uneasy transition of antiquities from private to state ownership, as the ideology, legislation and capacity of the state to claim antiquities strengthened.

Ioannēs Stamou Logothetēs (c. 1750–1826)

‘Gianachi Logotheti’, archon of Livadeia, and fighter in the War of Independence, is identified as the owner of a rare vase by Saverio Scrofani, who travelled in Greece in 1794–5, and a few years later by Edward Dodwell and Aubin-Louis Millin.³¹ This suggests that it was a noteworthy curiosity shown to foreign visitors. Dodwell writes that the ‘curious vase of terra cotta was found some years ago at the ruins of Aulis on the Euripos’.³² The vase does not survive today. Its painted decoration is illustrated and described in some detail by A. L. Millin (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). The plates show three scenes of figures within landscapes: one of rocks and a river, and two of a temple, shrine and theatre on three levels. The composition in three separate scenes, one of which is partially repeated, and the iconography, which includes architectural landscape, is unprecedented; it is therefore possible, if not likely, that it was not made in antiquity. This may then be an early example of the creation and trade of fake ancient vases for local Greek elite collectors.

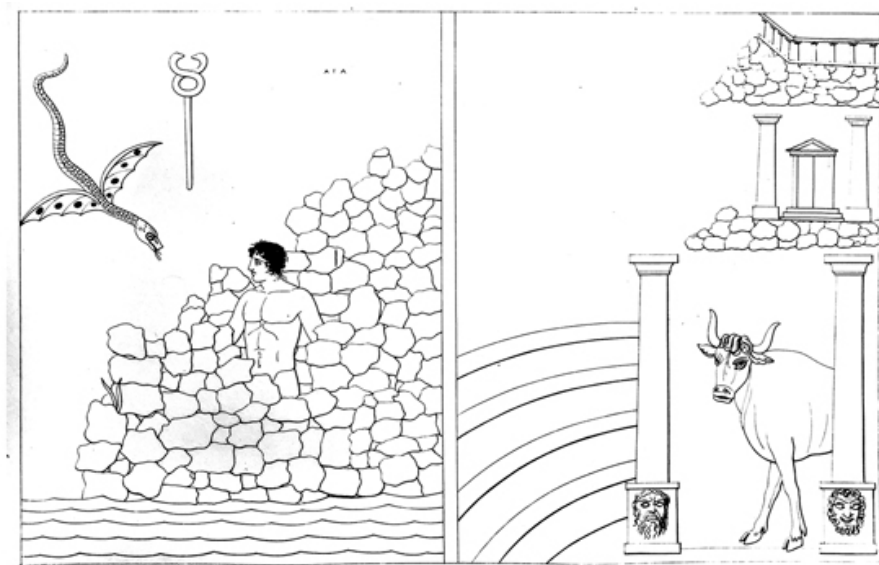


Figure 4.5 L. Millin, *Peintures de vases antiques, vulgairement appelés étrusques* (Paris: P. Didot, 1808), vol. 2: 78–84, planche 55.

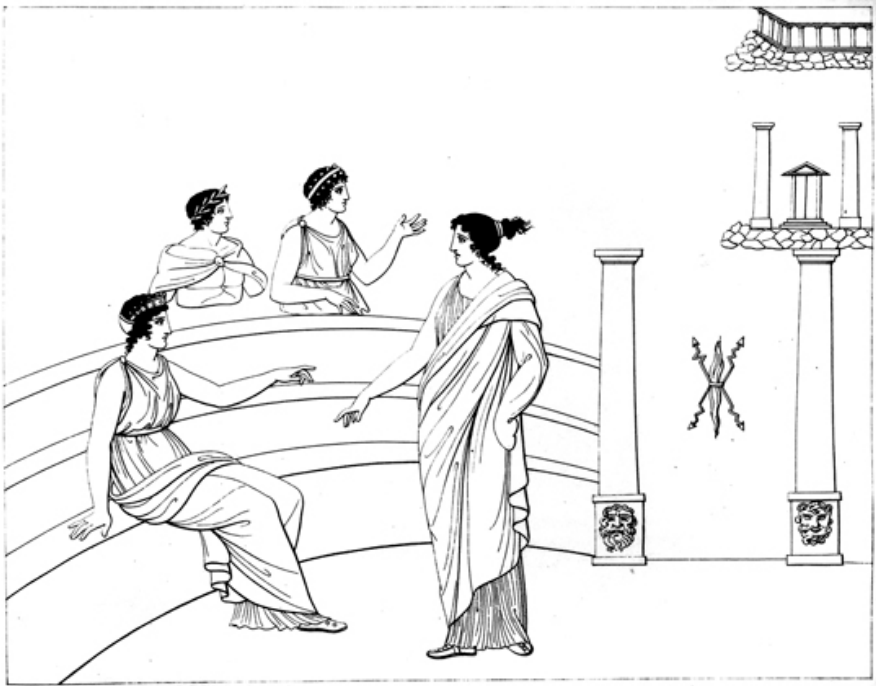


Figure 4.6 L. Millin, *Peintures de vases antiques, vulgairement appelés étrusques* (Paris: P. Didot, 1808), vol. 2: 78–84, planche 56.

Nikolaos Flogaitēs (1799–1867)

Nikolaos Flogaitēs fought in the War of Independence and remained a public figure in the first years of the Greek state.³³ In 1828 he wrote a letter directly to Kapodistrias urging the government to enforce a total ban on the export of antiquities and to establish a state museum:

During my stay here [in Aigina] I bought various ancient vessels or containers, to the extent that my financial means allowed me, with the intention of donating them to the first Public Museum that would be set up. These vessels, about sixty in number, are for the present in my hands, but they are counted in the power of your highness and to be handed over by me at your august commands. The donation is in truth of small value, but the hope is that it will incentivize many other citizens to donate antiquities of greater value.³⁴

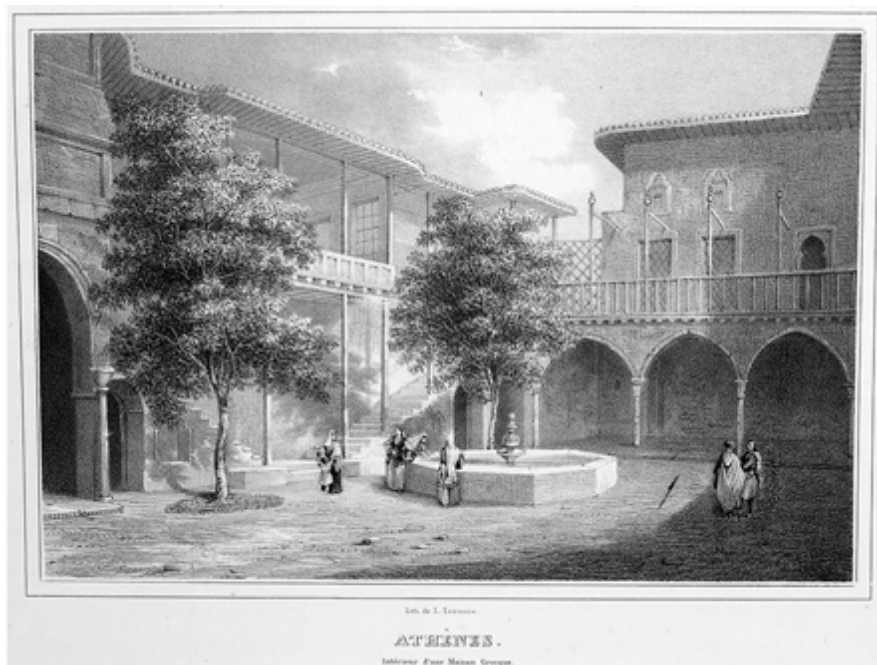
Here we have evidence of active Greek collecting of a substantial number of ancient vases intended for a future state museum. Their location and visibility at the time is not known. Flogaitēs conceived of antiquities as active agents in developing the skills needed in the new Greek state:

And what has the potential to arouse in greater measure our tendency to architecture, sculpture, painting, and what has the potential to speed up the progress of these beautiful arts, but these precious relics of the masterpieces of our ancestors?³⁵

Ancient vases are here grouped with higher-status sculpture and architectural remains, and conceived of as stimulants to a regeneration of the Greek nation.

Bartholomaïos Mertrud (exact dates unknown, active during the 1820s and 1830s)

Bartholomaïos Mertrud, a high-status Greek, was engaged in the acquisition and sale of vases on a large scale in 1831. He was a Catholic of French descent, a member of a prominent and rich Athenian family.³⁶ The extensive family house testifies to this social position: built c. 1780–90, and known from a plate by von Stackelberg, it comprised several large reception rooms, a two-storey chapel, a private wing, and on the ground level, a bath complex and thirteen underground reservoirs for oil suggesting significant trading activities (Figure 4.7). Unlike Flogaitēs, who offered to donate his sixty vases to the new museum, Mertrud sold his one hundred and ten vases to the museum in Aigina.³⁷ The quantity of vases suggests dedicated acquisition, whether through excavation or purchase, and it is possible that these vases were collected and displayed initially in the family house.



Nikolaos Kolovos

Nikolaos Kolovos was employed to oversee the building of a quarantine hospital in Aigina.³⁸ In 1829, the governor of the island wrote to the governing council of the Western Sporades, explaining that Kolovos had dug up ancient tombs in order to use the stone in the building of the hospital; he continues: 'He found (according to the testimony of the architect Mastrothomas) various ancient vessels, which he appropriated and deposited in his house.'³⁹ The governor argues that the vessels and any other antiquities unearthed at public expense should be handed over to the state. Here, excavation of tombs is followed by appropriation of ancient vases to a private Greek house in Aigina, though Petrakos has argued that the ancient vases may have been intended for Kolovos's immediate superior, Gropius, who was a prolific collector.⁴⁰

Anastasios Zapas

In March 1829 antiquities excavated illegally in Salamis by an Athenian, Anastasios Zapas, were listed by a state official, seized and sent to the council of the Western Sporades on Aigina. The list includes a relief, a fragment of sculpture, two inscriptions and seventeen ceramic vessels:

Three large vases with various pictures, one of which is broken. Seven other smaller ones of varying size. Another one in the form of a pot with its lid and with an earthen bird. Three other small ones in the form of cups and another three white ones, broken, in the form of marble.⁴¹

These five examples offer specific positive evidence for possession and at least some visibility of ancient vases in the private houses of Greeks from the late eighteenth century through to the late 1820s. Most of the examples concern high-status individuals, but there is no evidence to suggest that Anastasios Zapas was a member of the elite. These objects alternately emerge as curiosities to be seen by visitors, as commodities to be sold and as relics of the revered Greek past to be harnessed to the future state through public display and emulation. Much of the evidence suggests that private ownership was contested by the public authorities from the very inception of the Greek state.

Ancient vases in Albanian and Jewish homes

Edward Dodwell refers to the presence of ancient vases in private houses in non-Greek communities at the lower end of the social spectrum c. 1801–06. He mentions the display of ancient vases in the cottages of unnamed Albanians in ‘a miserable village called Mertese’, near Corinth:

The first cottage we entered presented objects of great interest, as connected with our anxiously desired discovery of the sepulchres of which we were in search. Upon the shelf which goes round the interior of these cottages, and on which they place their smaller culinary utensils, and vessels of earthen ware, I saw two small vases of terra-cotta, of rude but ancient workmanship: the other cottages exhibited vases of the same kind, but without any figures on them, or any thing which rendered them interesting in themselves.⁴²

Albanian villagers here appear to have unearthed the vases, either deliberately or accidentally through day-to-day agricultural labour, and put them on display in their homes. Mertese was not a destination on the Grand Tour, and thus motivations for the acquisition and display of the vases are unlikely to have been directly fuelled by elite foreign collecting interests. This passage suggests the existence of an independent bottom-up local Albanian engagement with ancient vases.

The narrative then focuses on a Jewish inhabitant of Corinth:

The villagers from Mertese informed me, that a Jew of Corinth, who had lately been digging in this spot, had found several vases. On my return to Corinth, I immediately called upon him, and found them heaped in a corner, with other rubbish. He, however, knew, or pretended to know, the value of an inscribed vase, which he showed me; and which with some difficulty, I bought of him.⁴³

Here we have evidence for several ancient vases purposefully excavated and brought back into a private house in Corinth. These included a Corinthian *pyxis* c. 570 BC later called ‘the Dodwell vase’ (Figures 4.8 and 4.9). In trying to assess the socio-economic status of this inhabitant of Corinth, Dodwell’s orientalist, and indeed, racist text has significant limitations. He implies that the man’s house was dirty, his learning superficial and motives mercenary. Although he suggests that the vases had been carelessly left in a corner ‘with other rubbish’ it is possible that they had not yet been cleaned following excavation. Clearly the inhabitant of Corinth was able to recognize and possibly to decipher the ancient Greek inscription, and was aware of the market

value of an inscribed vase. Despite Dodwell's insinuations it is by no means certain that his socio-economic status was low.⁴⁴ The nature of Dodwell's difficulty in buying the vase is not explained; it may refer simply to agreeing a price, but it may equally be understood to mean that the man was unwilling to part with the rare inscribed vase because he himself was a collector.



Figure 4.8 The Dodwell vase, pyxis from Merteza, c. 580–570 BC. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 327. H 0.140, D. 0.155. Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, Photograph Copyright Renate Kühling.



Figure 4.9 E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece: During the Years 1801, 1805, and 1806* (London: Rodwell & Martin, 1819), vol. 2: 198–199, plate ‘From Mertese near Corinth’.

All the passages examined here offer specific positive evidence for the presence of ancient vases in buildings in Greece under Ottoman rule, during the War of Independence and in the period of the establishment of the Greek state. They testify to the visibility of vases across the public/private divide, across the social spectrum and including Greek, Albanian and Jewish ethno-linguistic communities.

Discourses about ancient vases

Official Greek discourses

How prominent are ancient vases in texts referring to antiquities? Ancient vases are listed in the detailed breakdown of antiquities in important documents setting out the policy of the Greek state, such as

the 1807 foundational proposal of Adamantios Koraēs for legislation to safeguard antiquities in Greece and prevent their export;⁴⁵ so, too, the legislation of 1829 for the protection of antiquities.⁴⁶ The dominant Greek discourse is that of antiquities as ‘relics’ of the ancestors,⁴⁷ held in the ‘entrails’ of the earth,⁴⁸ and of Greece ‘denuded’ and ‘stripped’ when they are taken abroad by foreigners.⁴⁹ This could have been neatly applied to vases which were, indeed, found within the earth. But where the category of antiquities is broken down in government letters and in the press in the 1820s, typically what is specified is statues, inscriptions, coins, manuscripts and occasionally jewellery, while vases are rarely mentioned.

Perhaps the most telling evidence for the low visibility of vases in discourse is the 1832 first catalogue of antiquities of the first museum in Aigina, which does not enter vases as individual items.⁵⁰ This is despite the fact that the museum possessed far more vases than other items: a brief entry in the *Genikē Ephēmeris*, the official government publication, in February 1831, summarizing the holdings of the museum, lists 1090 painted vessels, as compared to 71 inscriptions, 14 reliefs, 24 sculptures and 359 coins.⁵¹ The second attempt at a museum catalogue by Iatridēs, again in 1832, consisted only of drawings of the antiquities, and here too, no vases were included.⁵²

So although vases were theoretically categorized as valuable antiquities and protected for the state by law from the outset, they did not feature prominently in the discourse and awareness of the Greek elite actually involved with antiquities on the ground. What were the reasons for this low visibility and valorization of ancient vases as compared to sculptures, inscriptions and coins? The analysis below deals with scholarly discourses and the art market, emanating first from Western European priorities, and second, from local perspectives in Greece.

Influence of Western European discourses on local discourses about ancient vases

The place of Greek vases at the inception of the scholarship of classical art

Western European scholarship on classical art originated and developed around collections of antiquities in Italy, and to a lesser extent in France, rather than Greece itself. Scholarly interest, starting with Johann Joachim Winckelmann, focused on sculpture, and not on Greek ceramics. The very Greekness of these objects had been challenged by a number of scholars, who instead argued that they were Etruscan.⁵³ Even where they were recognized as Greek, they were approached not so much as three-dimensional decorated

artefacts but as convex surfaces for figural painting in a limited palette, and therefore as a pale imitation of lost Greek panel paintings – the masterpieces referred to by authors such as Pliny – and, to a lesser extent as surfaces for texts, that is, Greek inscriptions. So at the inception of the discipline of classical art, three factors contributed to and entrenched the lower visibility and valorization of ancient Greek vases as important Greek artefacts, both absolutely and relatively to classical sculpture: the focus on antiquities in Italy, the elevation of classical sculpture, and the perception of vases as vehicles for painting and inscriptions.

Visibility of Greek vases in publications about Greece proper

European publications on antiquities in Greece itself similarly marginalized ancient vases, instead focusing on architecture and sculpture, starting with J. Stuart and N. Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens* (London, 1762). In the period under discussion here, the French publication *Expédition Scientifique de Morée ordonnée par le gouvernement français: Architecture, sculptures, inscriptions, et vues du Péloponnèse, des Cyclades et de l'Attique* (Paris, 1832–5), followed suit despite the fact that ancient vases abounded in the Peloponnese and Attica. In fact, they do feature in the frontispiece: a black-figure *lekythos*, an *alabastron* and a *skyphos*, both black-glazed, are discreetly placed on a fragmentary column capital in a fantastical arrangement of sculpture, architectural fragments and inscriptions within the natural landscape featuring a classical temple and a church (Figure 4.10). An indication of their origin in the earth through excavation is given by the placement of two more vessels on the ground at the foot of the marble capital. The four corners of the image are decorated with finials evoking palmette and tendril decoration of red-figure vases. Yet in the two hundred and sixty two plates of the three volumes, a single vase features: a head vase of a woman and an African from the first museum in Aigina⁵⁴ (Figure 4.11). This was no doubt chosen because it was a plastic vessel, more akin to a terracotta sculpture such as that depicted above it. No figural vases at all are illustrated in the publication, suggesting that the general low valorization of ancient vases established in relation to antiquities in Italy was replicated in publications about Greece proper.





Figure 4.11 A. Blouet et al. eds, *Expédition Scientifique de Morée ordonnée par le gouvernement français: Architecture, sculptures, inscriptions, et vues du Péloponèse, des Cyclades et de l'Attique* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1832–1835), vol. 3: Plate 44. Fig. I – ‘Terre cuite antique, grandeur naturel, appartenant à M. Vietty.’ Fig. II. III. et IV. – ‘Le profil et les deux faces d’un vase antique, du musée d’Égine’.

Ancient Greek vases in the Grand Tour art market

The relatively low placement of ancient vases within the hierarchy of antiquities also reflects the archaeological market: ancient Greek vases excavated in Italy and sold to men on the Grand Tour were cheaper

than sculpture. The market in Greece largely opened up after this pattern was established, and it is indicative that Edward Clarke mentions only coins and gems in his description of the antiquities market in Athens.⁵⁵

Influence of local considerations on local discourses about ancient vases

The local market

Western European discourses and market value of ancient vases were influential in establishing local Greek discourses about vases. But local concerns must have also played a significant role. The relatively lower valorization reflects the grim realities of the value of raw materials in Greece: marbles (sculpted or inscribed) could be transformed into lime for building work, and coins could be melted into precious metal, something remarked on in a newspaper article in Athens as early as 1826.⁵⁶ The ceramic material of vases had no intrinsic value; these objects were desirable as archaeological artefacts or decorative objects, and derived their monetary value from this alone.

Fragmentary ceramics in the ideology of the Greek state

Finally, Greek appreciation of the *wholeness* of ancient artefacts, evident in passages on sculptures, may have also effected a more negative reception of ancient vases.⁵⁷ The reason for this was that vases were almost always found broken, as Greek tombs, unlike tombs in Italy, were not rock-cut and offered little protection to the vessels. The Western European Romantic cult of the fragment had limited resonance in the idealistic fledgling Greek state.⁵⁸

So the lack of visibility of vases in the sources reflected the relatively lower status of vases within antiquities, driven both by Western European and local concerns, evident in discourses and the art market. Arguably this, in turn, influenced first hand experiences of vases in Greece, such as a less reverential and more casual attitude, and a greater willingness to handle them. The relationship between the traditional centres of Western classical scholarship and ‘marginal’ Ottoman Greece emerges as layered and multi-directional. While Western elites exercised power as the self-appointed arbiters of the nature and significance of classical culture, Greek nation-building practices of collecting ancient vases uniquely combined local and Western discourses. The fact that Greek soil was the original and contemporary source of ancient vases, extracted therefrom by the hands of local non-elite excavators, further complicates any straightforward notion of geographical and social centre and

periphery.

Local engagements with ancient vases: Multiple discourses and sensory experiences

Elite Greek engagements with ancient vases

Engagements with ancient vases by the local Greek elite were characterized by variation. There was a significant overlap between these and the vase-related activities of Western Europeans, including the acquisition of ancient vases through supervised excavation or purchase, either to keep in personal collections or to sell on to other individuals or museums; and the study of ancient vases, often influenced by knowledge of classical philology and the desire to find recognizable scenes and characters known from texts.⁵⁹ However, Greek experiences would have differed from Western European ones, as the latter were influenced by a neoclassical aesthetic: while British travellers may have responded to ancient vases through the lens of Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and of vase-inspired furniture of Thomas Hope and basalt tea-sets of Josiah Wedgwood, local residents of Athens did not.⁶⁰

Furthermore there were modes of engagement with ancient vases peculiar to elite Greeks. One of these was the practice of gifting them to important foreign visitors. In c. 1800 Edward Clarke met a man called Vlassopoulos, who had official British protection in exchange for services rendered, and therefore a person of some status (Figure 4.12):

He [Vlassopoulos] presented us, upon our arrival, a silver medal of *Ptolemy* and some beautiful *terra-cotta* vases found in *sepulchres* at a village called *Pesopodae*, near the *Inachus*, situate to the north of *Argos*. The *Albanian* peasants by whom they were discovered had broken many more; not choosing to use vessels that had been taken from *graves*, and conceiving them to be of no value.⁶¹

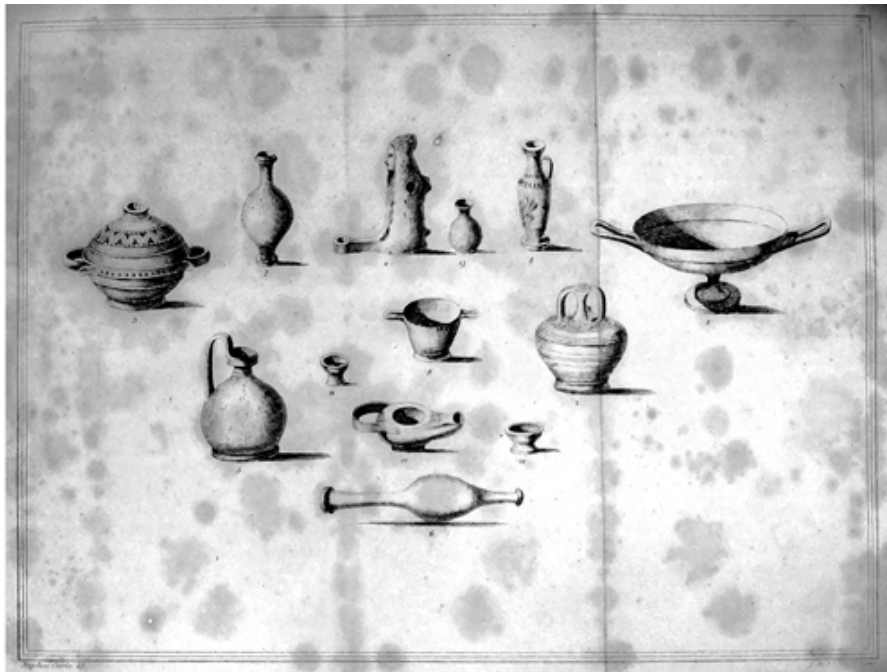


Figure 4.12 E. D. Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1816–1824), vol. 6: 458–459, plate ‘Terra-cottas found in the Sepulchres of Peloponnesus’.

Clarke implies that Vlassopoulos had no real interest in the objects, and he imputes an obsequious and ultimately mercenary motivation to him. While this may reflect Vlassopoulos’s approach, a more informed engagement with ancient vases is by no means precluded. The offering of this gift can be seen as the attempt to forge a bond in a deeply unequal relationship through a common appreciation of the history of Greece. The use of ancient vases in such interactions can be identified as peculiar to the Greek elite within an Ottoman cultural context of gift exchange.

Another such feature was the impetus *not* to sell vases for profit. This should be recognized as a radical step if seen, not from today’s perspective, but in the context of a time when Greeks and Western Europeans were fully involved in the antiquities trade and when Western European museums and the Greek state itself still, on occasion, acquired antiquities through direct purchase.⁶² It is exemplified by the enactment of legislation to curtail the trade in antiquities in 1827 and instances of donations of archaeological objects to the new state. Within the context of legal and moral claims of the Greek state on antiquities, Greek experiences of excavation in one’s own country and on one’s own private land have no Western European parallels.

Overall, then, elite Greek experiences with ancient vases are distinguished by a multiplicity of discourses and engagements, and their *coexistence* not just within the community but within individuals. Kyriakos Pittakys exemplifies this ambivalent and rich approach. He seems to have excavated, collected, studied, drawn, published and traded antiquities, while from 1832 he had responsibility for antiquities in mainland Greece, and was editor of the *Archaiologikē Ephēmeris* from 1837 to 1863.⁶³ In 1852, in the *Archaiologikē Ephēmeris*, he published a black-figure kylix, which is now in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin ([Figure 4.13](#)).⁶⁴ He writes that he had examined it in Aigina in 1829 shortly after it was excavated. Pittakys lists the inscriptions (which were the primary focus of his archaeological interests) and briefly describes the iconography; he also writes that he was not able to note down the measurements because it was taken out of his hands by a foreign buyer. This statement evokes Pittakys's haptic engagement with the cup and his desire to measure and record it; the fact that it is clearly put back together from multiple fragments suggests that either he or others involved in its excavation had carefully handled and glued it back together. While the experience of being outbid on an ancient vase may have been common to other Western European collectors, here the loss goes beyond that of a collector and scholar. In his writings Pittakys repeatedly elevates the archaeological remains of ancient Greece and laments the selling off of patrimony. While his own activities leave him open to accusations of hypocrisy, another way of interpreting his approach is that of coexisting discourses and activities which concurrently figured ancient artefacts including vases as sacred relics and valuable commodities.



Figure 4.13 Black-figure kylix from Aigina, c. 575–525 BC. 300748, Berlin, Antikensammlung, Berlin, Schloss Charlottenburg, 3151. Copyright: bpk/Antikensammlung, SMB/Johannes Laurentius.

Local non-elite engagements with ancient vases

On display inside buildings

The museum in Aigina does not appear to have allowed orphans visual let alone haptic access to the ancient vases. It is worth noting, however, that there is evidence for a broader linkage of official and pedagogical institutions with direct access to antiquities: in a decree of 1825 concerning the duties of the *ephor* of education, it is urged that antiquities be collected and displayed in a museum in every school, 'something most necessary for our history, for the discovery of the ancient names of cities and places, for the familiarisation with the skill of our ancestors'.⁶⁵ The existence of glass vitrines in newly established schools is not likely and this leaves open the possibility of more direct haptic access to ancient vases, which after all were abundant, transportable and cheaper than marble artefacts. Furthermore there is an indication that girls were not excluded from such access: a girls' school was run by the *Philomousos Hetaireia*, one of whose aims was to collect and safeguard antiquities, which may consequently have been visible in their three buildings in Athens.⁶⁶ Visual and possibly haptic experience of ancient vases, in the broader context of antiquities, may have occurred in official state institutions, offering children from non-elite backgrounds controlled but casual access and simultaneously elevating cheaper ceramics to the status of revered relics.

The Greek non-elite experience of ancient vases in such official top-down staged settings can be contrasted with non-elite bottom-up experiences in the Albanian village of Mertese. These emerge as multi-sensorial. Ancient vases on display in small, poor domestic buildings, which typically consisted of one room, would have been visually available to all those who entered, including both genders and all ages. Display on an open shelf with other earthenware vessels in daily use also suggests ease of physical access. Haptic engagement would have emphasized similarities and differences between ancient and contemporary ceramics in term of texture, such as glaze and incisions, and weight. Handling would have entailed the (re)placing of the vessel on a wooden surface and therefore also engaged the acoustic sense. Although the discovery of ancient vases in tombs makes their use in food consumption unlikely, this cannot be entirely ruled out. The use of an ancient statue to grind coffee by Greek farmers in the area of the Lyceum in Athens, described by Dodwell, would be an interesting parallel.⁶⁷ The sense of taste, then, would have completed the sensorium in non-elite Albanian engagement with ancient vases in Mertese in the Ottoman Peloponnese.

The process of excavation

The hard manual labour involved in digging and uncovering ancient vases was carried out by non-elite inhabitants of Greece from across the different ethnic communities. Mention has already been made of individual excavators: the Greek Anastasios Zapas, the ‘Jew of Corinth’ and the Albanian inhabitants of Mertese. In these cases the excavators appear to have been self-motivated or, in the case of the Albanians at Mertese, the finds may have been chance. In other cases the excavators worked for elites: for Western Europeans directing excavations or for the newly established state itself. Locals with knowledge of the location of ancient tombs and experience of digging must have been involved in the excavation of vases in Patras and their packing into two cases for export to France in 1826 for General Virgile Schneider (1779–1847), who fought with the revolutionary Greeks.⁶⁸ In 1829 an Athenian offered to dig and hand over the finds to the state in return for money.⁶⁹ The degree of self-determination and the nature of the motivation no doubt affected the experience of excavating, while the manual labour and purpose of revelation entailed a multi-sensory experience, particularly visual and haptic.

Further details about the excavation and treatment of ancient vases can be found in the writings of the Smyrna-based British merchant and collector Thomas Burgon (1787–1858). Burgon’s information concerns excavations carried out in Athens in 1813 under his direction and in his presence,⁷⁰ but he notes that his foreman had been employed for many years in exploring tombs by Louis Fauvel, who was himself rarely present at excavations.⁷¹ The ‘Athenian husbandman, of great experience, wearing the Albanian dress’,⁷² ‘an acute man’,⁷³ then, would typically have carried out such digging *without* the supervision of an educated and empowered Western European collector. Furthermore Burgon’s writings make it clear that he was influenced by the ideas of experienced diggers. The following passage concerns the discovery of a Panathenaic amphora, later known as ‘the Burgon amphora’ (Figures 4.14 and 4.15):

I must explain that the labourer was under an impression that the amphora was not worth preserving, – as no painted vase had ever been discovered of so large a size, and previous experience had induced the common belief among the excavators, that thick and large vases were always of ordinary red earth and coarse fabric. It was, therefore usual to disregard them, when any such were found, and they were consequently never washed or examined. *In fact, I had myself imbibed this erroneous notion*, and did not suspect this amphora to be painted, till, on scraping off the earth from one of the fragments, I saw the legs of the Horses.⁷⁴



Figure 4.14 The Burgon vase; black-figured panathenaic amphora, 565–560 BC. British Museum 1842,0728.834. Copyright The British Museum.



Figure 4.15 Drawing and measurements of ‘the Burgon amphora’ by Thomas Burgon, 1813, from the archives of the Ashmolean Museum. Image: author’s own, reproduced with kind permission from the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

In the next passage a top-down but complex power dynamic emerges: Burgon chooses the spot for the excavation, the foreman interprets the site as a half-dug grave through the appearance of the soil, and strongly advises no further digging, but ultimately Burgon overrules the local voice. The foreman’s intense and varied sensory experiences through manual labour are evoked in this description (Figure 4.16)75:

[He] came to me and assured me that it was of no use to dig further on that spot ... [He] repeated his assertion, that he would consent to lose his head if any object was found. Considering the appearance of the earth, I was myself much inclined to be of his opinion, but curiosity moving me just to see *the bottom* of the supposed *intended grave*, I desired him to continue digging with the pickaxe till he could proceed no further, and myself watched the resulting momentary expectation of his arriving at live rock. After some hours hard labour, and having attained a depth of about twelve feet, he was *astounded* – (he crossed himself, as if to implore protection from any demoniacal influence which had so deceived him) – by the discovery of a coarse vase of yellow earth, of amphora shape, about two feet six inches high, and with a

pointed bottom, the mouth or neck wanting: – (see G. on the Plate.) Proceeding then with more caution, he found two more coarse vases, one of which was of black earth, (marked E. on the Plate,) and the other red (F.), with zigzags *scratched* on it.⁷⁶



Figure 4.16 T. Burgon, ‘An attempt to point out the vases of Greece proper which belong to the heroic and Homeric ages’, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* 2.2.2 (1847): 296–297, plate entitled ‘Vases of the Heroic Ages’. Copyright The British Library Board (AC.9125).

The passage reveals the Athenian foreman to be Christian, potentially either Greek or Albanian. Burgon’s interpretation of the man’s crossing himself on the revelation of the tomb may be correct, or it may also be related to a superstition about the opening of ancient graves. Burgon interprets the man’s words and bodily gestures as articulating the intensity of his emotional engagement with the process of excavation. It is through the sense of sight that the man is astounded, by the unfolding revelation of the vessels. Physically he becomes immersed in the dug-out tomb, engaging with the soil by means of the pickaxe and later, it is implied, using his hands to investigate the ceramic vessels, their burnt bones and the soil itself to establish the absence of a skeleton. Haptic engagement with the ceramics is also indicated by Burgon’s emphasis on the ‘scratched’, that is, incised, surface of one of the vessels.

In his description of the finding of ‘the Burgon amphora’, Burgon

regretfully mentions that a labourer broke off a piece of the vase with a pickaxe, and also threw away some fragments before realizing that they were worth keeping because ‘the calcareous incrustation, which attaches itself to vases deposited so many centuries in the earth, had almost precluded the possibility of seeing its surface’.⁷⁷ Here, visual engagement with the surface of the vase is impeded by the material accumulation on the vase, which can be accessed through touch in the first instance and then removed. The reconstruction of vases by gluing together the fragments is referred to by Burgon,⁷⁸ while Edward Clarke describes the process of cleaning in vivid detail:

A patera with two handles, of the most perfect form and exquisite workmanship, was almost covered with a white incrustation, like mortar, as hard as flint. After placing it for thirty-six hours in diluted *muriatic* acid, during all which time the extraneous cement dissolved with effervescence, there appeared upon its surface a beautiful black varnish, shining like polished jet, not in the slightest degree affected by the acid.⁷⁹

The use of hydrochloric acid for the cleaning of antiquities in general is described in the official government press on 17 September 1830 in an apparently didactic manner, including the dilution strength.⁸⁰ Knowledgeable local excavators would have engaged in the highly tactile processes of cleaning and gluing back together ceramic fragments to reconstitute whole vessels.

Non-elite engagement with ancient vases varied, ranging from minimal apathy, through casual familiarity to multi-sensory engagement and experiential knowledge of archaeological location, shapes and textures. At the same time, European travellers’ desire for these objects and willingness to pay constituted them as market commodities. The establishment of the new Greek state brought some change: its policies of appropriating or sometimes buying antiquities from individuals under the market price challenged the straightforward market value of the objects, while its greater interest in acquiring marbles conveyed the lower valorization of ancient vases. But their presence in the new museum and perhaps in schools established ancient vases as valuable relics of the ancestors and simultaneously objects to learn from in the building of the modern Greek state.

Conclusions

In their engagements with ancient vases in Greece, both locals and foreigners were connecting to an ancient culture felt to be theirs,

experienced as familiar, and, at least by some, considered to be profoundly relevant and modern. But this operated in different ways. Western Europeans experienced ancient Greek culture and its materiality as their own through their schooling in the neoclassical aesthetic, their intellectual dominance in the study of ancient Greece, and their real present-day political and military power in Greece. The range of local responses was much broader, as it included a variety of ethno-linguistic communities and a social range. While a sense of ownership arose from the material presence of and casual familiar interactions with ancient vases, responses ranged from Albanian smashing and preservation of vases found in graves, and excavating for hire, through Greek Orthodox and Catholic collecting to sell for profit or donate to the newly founded museum, to Jewish and Greek Orthodox recognition of ancient Greek vase inscriptions. Despite their lower visibility in the sources, ancient vases, together with other antiquities, were yet seen as vehicles for the revival of ancient ancestral crafts for the new Greek state. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Greek – and particularly local elite Greek – engagements with ancient vases was the coexistence of variety of apparently contradictory discourses and practices. A fundamental aspect of this was a concurrent view of ancient vases as trading commodities, as sacred relics connected to ancient ancestors and as agentic objects in the regeneration of the new Greek state.

The marginalized engagements with ancient vases evoked in this chapter matter; they should take their place alongside better-known responses of European travellers and collectors in Greece at the time, enriching and complicating our understanding of the reception of classical material culture. It is hard, but worthwhile, to tease out the nature of these varied experiences *in extremis*; in addition, what emerges very clearly is the way that these local responses had a decisive impact on the corpus of ancient vases we have today. In the passages analysed here we have seen Albanian peasants purposely smashing vases and Athenian labourers accidentally breaking and throwing away fragments of ‘the Burgon amphora’. While the destructive role played by uneducated inhabitants of Greece has been emphasized by scholars, their part in the saving and safeguarding of vases has been largely ignored. In both of the above-mentioned destructive incidents, for example, it should be remembered that ancient vases were also saved. The role of the ‘Jew of Corinth’ in finding and preserving ‘the Dodwell vase’ likewise has not been recognized. The nomenclature of ‘the Burgon amphora’ and ‘the Dodwell vase’ has helped to obfuscate the crucial roles played by local and largely non-elite inhabitants of Ottoman Greece in their recovery from tombs. Both these vases played important roles in the emerging

scholarship of the history of Greek vases.⁸¹ In this exploration of local engagements with ancient Greek vases in Ottoman Greece 1800–1833 I have argued for a richer picture of collaboration and interaction between elite Western Europeans and the inhabitants of Ottoman Greece in the creation of the canon of classical art, which still determines our understanding of the ancient world today. My emphasis on the integration of hitherto marginalized voices into established narratives of collecting classical material culture demonstrates the potential to broaden the social and ethnic range of subjects we can hope to study as Classicists, and the potential to shed new light on the origin and meanings of ‘the classical canon’. The emerging polyphony across the social and cultural spectrum arguably has a direct relationship with the range of audiences we can hope to address today.

CHAPTER 5

THE HAND THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

DANIEL DUNGLAS HOME'S DISEMBODIED CLASSICS

Edmund Richardson

In the stacks of Cambridge University Library, there's a very ordinary looking cardboard box, labelled SPR.MS 28/972. Inside is a piece of Victorian magic: a yellowed, spidery plaster cast of the hand of Daniel Dunglas Home (Figure 5.1).¹



Figure 5.1 The hand of Daniel Dunglas Home. Cambridge University Library, Society for Psychical Research Archive, SPR.MS 28/972. Copyright the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Home was a Victorian wizard: one of the most famous spiritualist mediums of the nineteenth century. At his command, tables floated

around the room. Spirits rapped out messages from beyond the grave. Disembodied hands clutched your face. Houdini called him a ‘hypocrite of the deepest dye’;² others called him ‘our King of mediums’.³ His séances were attended by royalty and tycoons, scientists and classicists. And he was obsessed with the ancient world.

In the heyday of spiritualism, when there was nothing so alive as the dead, classics *in extremis* – from the margins, from beyond the grave – came to dominate discourse. From marauding mummies to ectoplasmic encounters, tales of the still-living dead were whispered in darkened rooms and shouted on the front pages, across the world. The nineteenth-century battle over spiritualism was one of the most spectacular intellectual contests of the age. (‘Spiritualism’ itself is a notoriously slippery concept, and will here be used to represent the breadth of a discourse which was marked by conflict and competition more often than consensus. Many of this chapter’s spiritualists, far from fighting side-by-side, spent their lives locked in the most violent disagreements.) This battle drew in high and low, scholars and common, magicians and journalists. It was fought in libraries, in the séance-room, in newspapers, in fetid courtrooms and on the stage. And it was quite literally spectacular: this was a period where theatricality and the pursuit of knowledge went hand in hand – where even the most sober-looking professor might have a little something up his sleeve.⁴ Most importantly, though, the advance of spiritualism was not a battle anyone could avoid.

Even the most confirmed sceptics had to reckon with the rising ghostly tide. In the depths of the British Museum, E.A. Wallis Budge, the Keeper of Egyptian and Syrian Antiquities between 1894 and 1924, spent many hours grumpily insisting that his collections were not haunted and shooing self-proclaimed experts in the occult away from his mummies. (One day, he would insist that the whole business was ‘bunkum’.⁵ The next, he might find a ‘psychic portrait’ of Cleopatra waiting for him in his office, and a letter from a British Admiral, demanding his opinion on it.⁶ Or perhaps Madame Blavatsky would be there, to offer advice on the Museum’s ‘unlucky mummy’.)⁷ In between times, he was to be found at dinners of London’s secretive Ghost Club, telling his most hair-raising tales.

As I have discussed elsewhere,⁸ classical scholarship and spiritualist discourse collided – and often overlapped – with each other, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some classicists believed in their own psychic powers, others conducted experiments in telepathy – and some even consulted ancient ghosts.⁹ Spiritualists, meanwhile, rewrote the history of the ancient world into a history of spiritualism:

When Greece was at the apex of her glory, when her sons were at the apogee of their intellectual and artistic achievements, spiritualism, pure, and unadulterated by metaphysical apologetics, spiritualism, practiced even to the minutest detail according to the methods which are in vogue to-day, spiritualism was the religion through which the sons and daughters of ancient Greece received their inspiration.¹⁰

Spiritualism disrupted Victorian notions of time: no longer was the past irrecoverable, it was suddenly – seemingly – very much alive. There was nothing so real, for many, as the unseen world; no truer history than that written *in extremis*, from beyond the grave. The past was present. Cicero was looking over your letters. Socrates was putting questions to you. Virgil was correcting your translations. When Gulliver came to Glubbudbrib, the island of magicians, he found that the ruler had the ‘power of calling whom he pleases from the dead’.¹¹ When Gulliver was offered his pick of ghosts to converse with, he ordered up Alexander: ‘I desired to see Alexander the Great at the head of his army, just after the battle of Arbela: which, upon a motion of the governor’s finger, immediately appeared in a large field, under the window where we stood. Alexander was called up into the room: it was with great difficulty that I understood his Greek.’¹² In the eighteenth century, conversations with Alexander’s ghost took place on imaginary islands, and were a matter of fiction. In the nineteenth century, those conversations started taking place in London and New York, and became, for many, a matter of fact. (When the ghost of Alexander materialized at one séance, the ancient apparition was compared to a distinctly contemporary technology of memory: ‘The impression produced was similar to that of the photographic process of Daguerre.’)¹³ But could these ghostly promises of perfect recollection be trusted? Was that really Alexander standing before us? Whatever you happened to believe, you faced the same problem: how to prove it.

In so-called spirit photographs, figures from the ancient world appeared to be caught on camera, glancing over your shoulder. Here, surely, was proof of the unseen world. ‘As the likenesses of *real men and women*, who lived on this earth in past Eras, they must strike the beholder with astonishment at their commanding forms.’¹⁴ As Sarah Willburn put it, such photographs ‘insist that the past is back and continuous with the present, not forever out of reach. In other words, they claim to capture an actual encounter with the past rather than the status of replicas or recreations’.¹⁵

‘Spirit photographs’ were, however, always one awkward revelation away from ridicule. The ‘pioneer’ of the field was William Mumler. ‘By

Mumler's own admission in his 1875 memoir, the entire enterprise had begun as a joke: he had taken what he believed to be a badly developed photograph and showed it to a Spiritualist customer to rib him. To Mumler's horror, he found himself and the photograph plastered on the front page of Spiritualist newspapers in Boston and New York later that week. Mumler was subsequently converted to Spiritualism, or at least he recognized the advantages of changing his mind.¹⁶ (At Mumler's trial for fraud, his lawyer compared him to Galileo, and P.T. Barnum testified against him, having finally met a hustler more brazen than himself.) Much excitement was generated, among believers, by photographs of the so-called 'Cyprian Priestess': 'in earth-life she was dedicated to the Temple of Venus in Cyprus'¹⁷ and she was pictured hovering over an assortment of Victorian subjects. Upon closer examination, the face of the 'Priestess' turned out to be 'merely the reproduction of a face in a picture by a German artist'.¹⁸ There was nothing ancient, or ghostly, or priestly, about this 'priestess'.

Such setbacks did little to stop the tide. Wallis Budge's 'unlucky mummy' (actually part of an inner coffin, not a mummy) was photographed at the British Museum: the photographer 'pointed out the semblance of a human form, which appeared on the photograph, but was not visible on the mummy case'.¹⁹ According to the archives of London's Ghost Club: 'This photograph is now in the British Museum, attached to the back of the mummy case.'²⁰ There is something a little suspicious about this story: did 'bunkum' Budge really allow a spirit photograph to be stuck onto the back of one of his artefacts? What is clear, however, is that throughout the nineteenth century, scholarly and spiritualist discourses intertwined. For Andrew Lang, the President of the Society for Psychical Research, the latest archaeological discoveries confirmed his faith in the unseen. Just like the lost cities of the ancient world, the spirits of antiquity were out there, waiting to be discovered:

If other members of the Society [for Psychical Research] agree with me in the hope (in my own case the belief) that many orthodox theories of all kinds are apt to be upset in the course of time, that new fields of knowledge are perhaps to be annexed, our attitude may, doubtless, be called Romantic. Yet in other fields I have seen my early romantic aspirations made actual; I have seen a vast region of the historic past, in which from boyhood I fervently believed, thrown open by the spade of the excavator. I have seen Homer's 'golden Mycenae' and 'Crete of the Hundred Cities' won from the realm of dreams by Dr Schliemann, and by Mr Arthur Evans, and their followers.²¹

Needless to say, not every attempt to establish the authenticity of ancient ghosts went well. In 1905, the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* recorded one particularly ill-judged spiritual land-grab. A medium, Mr Bailey, was in the habit of materializing ancient coins and objects – supposedly plucked from the depths of time: ‘He then sat again on the chair (a large arm chair), we opposite to him, and while chatting to us with his hands on his knees, there fell at his right side, apparently from a height, judging by the force of the fall, six coins. We picked them up. They were thick coins, covered with various Oriental inscriptions.’²² Why bother excavating and hoping, when Mr Bailey could simply pluck the past out of the air? He was ready to put the emerging archaeological profession out of business. A large packet, bearing Mr Bailey’s trove, was dispatched to the British Museum, and the long-suffering Wallis Budge. The contents included: ‘one ancient Grecian [...] twenty one Ptolemy coins’, ‘eleven Roman coins, of the early Christian period, and one scarab’ and photographs of ‘clay tablets, seventeen in number’.²³ The response was not quite what Mr Bailey’s believers had hoped for. A curator wrote back to the psychic investigators: ‘The coins are genuine, but are not of any value or rarity. [...] All the supposed Babylonian and Assyrian antiquities are forgeries. [...] The copper coins of the Ptolemies may be obtained from the dealers for a few pence each.’²⁴ Wallis Budge himself put an end to Mr Bailey’s invasion of his territory: ‘poor copies of well-known objects and drawings’,²⁵ not treasures from a new Troy, were the fruits of his mediumship.

Little more was heard of Mr Bailey.

At the heart of this kaleidoscopic, baffling, culture-defining discourse stood Daniel Dunglas Home. He was a much harder character to read – and his ghosts were much harder to dispel – than poor Mr Bailey. Was Home genuinely capable of performing wonders – or was he a supreme charlatan? Unlike almost all the other prominent Victorian mediums, he was never caught cheating – and he never confessed to deception. The answer to the riddle of Daniel Dunglas Home depends on your perspective. For some, his powers were beyond question, as much a fact as the laws of gravity, which he so regularly defied (Figure 5.2): ‘You are our King of mediums’, wrote one admirer. ‘You have been floating in the air a hundred times – a thousand persons must have seen you: make them come forward and testify the truth legally.’²⁶ ‘Yours’, the spirit of Home’s mother assured her son (at least, according to the son), ‘is a glorious mission – you will convince the infidel, cure the sick, and console the weeping.’²⁷ The infidel, however, took some convincing. For many, Home was a mirage, a con-artist, enshrouded in tall tales and the faith of his followers: ‘a weak, credulous, half-educated, fanatical person, born,

bred, and educated in wonderful stories, who has lived from his earliest years in a whole atmosphere and mirage of dreaming'.²⁸

Was the world changing before your very eyes – or was the most daring swindler of the age practising his art upon you? If, as one reviewer of Home's memoirs put it, it was 'a true and honest book, it is one of the most important works ever presented to the world. But should the opposite be the case, then Mr Home is the greatest impostor that ever deluded mankind'.²⁹ Home stood between real and unreal, centre and margins, truth and lies, the living and the dead. And above all else, he wanted you to believe.

More than that: he needed you to believe. For most of his life, Home was far from wealthy. And despite mingling with royalty, he lived a precarious existence, 'the fragility of his social and economic status'³⁰ a constant concern, never knowing if the doors of the wealthy would open to him from one day to the next; a liminal figure haunting the heart of Victorian society. When he – temporarily – found himself in better circumstances in 1866, letters poured in congratulating him.³¹ (More letters poured in asking for money.)³²

'I do not know why', an admirer wrote to Home, 'but you are the only one of the so called mediums, in whom I have had confidence.'³³ In Meville's novel *The Confidence-Man*, the slippery protagonists mingle with the passengers on board a Mississippi riverboat, promising much, and asking always for 'confidence' in return. 'Ah, would you but have confidence, you should be the new Æson, and I your Medea. A few vials of my Omni-Balsamic Reinvigorator would, I am certain, give you some strength.'³⁴ The radical trust advocated by the tricksters is what Home desired for himself. 'Very few spiritualists seem to have "truth" for their motto',³⁵ wrote a friend to him. It was amid this snakes-and-ladders existence that Home caught hold of the classical past. His classicism was, at first, a carefully staged performance – where the ghosts of antiquity anointed the red-haired huckster as their champion on earth:

Mr Home then rose from his chair, and was walked to and fro complaining of pressure on the head. Suddenly he said he felt a weight on his head. It was then noticed that a crown shaped like a Greek *patera*, the base fitting on like a skull-cap, had been placed on his head. Tendrils and outlines of leaves were plainly visible, the leaves being vine-shaped, appearing to hang from the edges of the broad *patera*. Mr Home appeared greatly agitated, and repeated, 'I am crowned'; 'I am free from pain'; 'I am receiving a new mission.'³⁶



Figure 5.2 The ascent of Daniel Dunglas Home. From Louis Figuier, *Les Mystères de la science. Aujourd'hui* (Paris: Librairie illustrée, 1880): 633.

Home calculated that classical ghosts, sufficiently well advertised, would be fly-paper for Victorian high society. He was not disappointed. Tales of his feats even reached Egypt.³⁷ The elite begged for admission to his séances. As the Earl of Dunraven recalled, at one, Home spoke of Alexander – and of the compelling power certain people had over others: ‘You would scarcely think that Alexander the Great is yet, as it were, in the position of the lowest servant; he did certain things on earth that he knew to be very wrong, and he was a very powerful man – powerful, I mean, magnetically.’³⁸

Home set out to magnetize the world. And the classical past let him plant a foot in any door. Or rather, a hand in any door – for Home’s séances were famous, above all, for their disembodied hands: clutching, clammy and inexplicable. ‘The hand afterwards came and *shook hands* with each one present. I felt it minutely. It was tolerably

well and symmetrically made, though not perfect; and it was *soft* and slightly *warm*. IT ENDED AT THE WRIST.’³⁹ (Theories abound as to what these hands actually were – but a popular explanation, that they were Home’s feet, was scorned by believers. ‘I should feel no more difficulty in swearing that the member I felt was a human hand of extraordinary life, and not Mr Home’s foot, that that the nose of the Apollo Belvidere [sic] is not a horse’s ear.’)⁴⁰

Home’s own hands became objects of unhealthy fascination. ‘I beg’, wrote a friend, ‘to introduce Mr Bathurst, a friend of Mr Richard Beamish, who called upon you with me for the purpose of getting a drawing of your hand.’⁴¹ ‘My friend Miss Douglas’, wrote another, ‘has intreated me to ask you to wear the enclosed pair of gloves for a short time and then return them to her in the enclosed envelope.’⁴² The touch of Home’s hand was a rare, illicit thrill. Viscount Adare recorded one evening alone with the medium: ‘By the attitude he assumed I recognized the spirit he calls “the nameless doctor.” He stood beside me apparently lost in thought for a minute for two, then kneeling down, made me unbutton my waistcoat, began sounding my chest as doctors do; he then rubbed and patted over the chest, loins, and legs.’⁴³ Home’s hands embodied the immediacy of his communion with the past: transformed from faint echoes and fragmented objects to a fleshy presence.

Many who came to his séances could hardly explain the effect he had on them. ‘Poor Mrs Chester was devastated, the night of the Reading, and was nearly dead with fright when she reached home [...]. Why dear Dan she actually did not expect to live till morning. She is not only living however, but she did not take the least bit of a cold.’⁴⁴ Others were more straightforward in their desire: one ‘poor boy’ buttonholed a friend of Home’s, and ‘wanted to know “if I could tell him anything he had done to make Dan lose all interest in him”’. ‘He was afraid “you had seen some qualities in him to dislike.” I knew he was wretched when I first met him, for he was white as a sheet.’⁴⁵ Home’s correspondence is a fearful swamp of sin, tears, promises, melodrama, confessions and barely suppressed desire. ‘My one, darling Dan’, wrote one lady, ‘I thought that I loved you as dearly as possible then, but now, it seems to me, I do love you even more.’⁴⁶

The absent past has a powerful erotic charge. For many scholars, notably Billings, desire for the ancient world is always-already frustrated: ‘*Erotics is a condition of classical reception*.’⁴⁷ As Martindale puts it, ‘it is the intensity of desire for what is lost that for Billings specifically marks classical reception’.⁴⁸ Desire for the ancient world, here, is a desire that can never be satisfied: for the lost city, the fragmented text, the broken statue, for a world beyond reach or repair. Yet like Schliemann wrestling Troy from ‘the realm of

dreams’,⁴⁹ Home powerfully disrupted ‘the absence at the heart of antiquity’s presence’,⁵⁰ insisting that the past was not truly past; that desire for what was lost could, at long last, be satisfied.

The *eros* of unfulfilled desire became – for a select few guests at Home’s séances – a very different kind of *eros*: desire (seemingly) fulfilled, at once sacred and profane. Should you seek a Victorian ‘erotics of reception’, you may find it at the dusty fingertips of SPR.MS 28/972. As a certain Dr Gully of Malvern recalled:

The Guardian of Strength came upon the bed, and I [Dr Gully] felt him, as palpably and certainly as I ever felt a flesh hand, handle my legs from hips to feet, pressing them firmly but equally all down, a sort of shampooing, in fact. He continued to do this for nearly a quarter of an hour (I feeling his general form on the bed just as assuredly as I felt his hand on my lower extremities), until the limbs became hot, and suddenly burst into a profuse warm perspiration, which immediately relieved my head.⁵¹

The past was no longer absent presence or present absence, object of dreams, fragment *in extremis* or *eros* unfulfilled. It grabbed you by ‘the lower extremities’, and didn’t let go.

Home set up his Spiritual Athenaeum at 22 Sloane Street, Knightsbridge, London, and from there, led the battle to give an ancient shape to contemporary spiritualism. The Athenaeum fascinated and scandalized believers, in roughly equal measure. ‘Thousands on both sides of the Atlantic’, wrote the American Andrew Jackson Davis, ‘will look eagerly for the “Transactions” of the London Spiritual Athenaeum.’⁵² For Home, the view from Sloane Street was exceedingly good. He and his ancient spirits appeared to have seduced the world.

All seductions, however, have their setbacks. And Home’s found its nemesis in the person of Mrs Jane Lyon, a woman who, as Lamont puts it, ‘provoked remarks that were seldom charitable’. ‘In her sixties, short, stout and childless’,⁵³ she was also extremely wealthy, and took a fancy to Home, bestowing on him a series of immense gifts and bequests, totalling tens of thousands of pounds. But then Mrs Lyon had second thoughts, and had Home arrested for swindling her. In court, she claimed that the spirit of her late husband had instructed her (through Home, of course) to give him the money. ‘The extraordinary case of Lyon v. Home’⁵⁴ was a sensation: covered gleefully in almost every major London newspaper. Henry George Liddell, one of the most prominent classical scholars in Britain – his daughter Alice would inspire Lewis Carroll’s adventures in Wonderland – made a cameo in the court proceedings, and fulminated about ‘the rascality’ of Home to Robert Browning, ‘and how his own

incredible stupidity as well as greediness wrought his downfall'.⁵⁵ Letters of support from believers poured in to the Athenaeum: 'I cannot tell you the disgust – which all our friends feel at the Mobs [...] it is a disgrace to England – but I feel afraid it has been got up to throw you off your balance – so much depends on command of self.'⁵⁶ Dr Gully, ever-loyal, wrote: 'If a jury is not besotted in their prejudices about spiritualism [...] [it] must prove you to be innocent of fraud.'⁵⁷

But the verdict went against Home, and the court parted him from his new-found fortune. 'Mr Home and his allies in this world and the world of "spirits" have received a severe and salutary check', gloated the *Daily News*.⁵⁸ The *Times* hoped that the trial would prove to be the high-water-mark of the nation's passion for spiritualism: 'The result of the trial was greatly to damp the ardour of many of the persons, fashionable or otherwise, who had previously been active among the advocates of spiritualism.'⁵⁹ Far from being the heir to ancient secrets, Home was portrayed by *Punch* in an equally classical, though much less flattering garb, as the heir to ancient con-artists:

The Oracle of Delphi Company (Limited). Prospectus. This Society has been formed for the purpose of extracting coin of the realm from the pockets of a confiding public, and performing the wondrous operation of raising the wind by spiritual agency. The facts of modern and ancient Spiritualism exhibit a closeness of resemblance which demonstrates the unity of their causation, and the identity of the classic Pythoness with the modern Medium.⁶⁰

The Athenaeum was forced to close its doors. As if that was not bad enough, stories began to circulate in Paris that several members of the nobility had sneaked into one of Home's séances, disguised themselves in wigs and robes, and appeared as the 'spirits' of Socrates and Alcibiades. When the former materialized, he created a sensation: 'The white and flowing beard, the bald head and crushed nose were unmistakeable – Socrates stood, as in life, in the very midst of that gay and frivolous circle, evoked from his slumber of centuries to furnish sport for a Parisian *salon*!'⁶¹ But then the pair unmasked themselves – much to the delight of the assembled company, and the chagrin of Home. 'Here is my friend Socrates, otherwise Marshal Baraguay d'Hilliers, ready to appear again whenever you choose, and close at hand is my comrade, Eugène Guinot in life, and Alcibiades in death, waiting to be summoned.'⁶²

A few years after the Lyon case, Home's hold on the ancient world had become a punchline. Other mediums were replicating his feats and promising still greater miracles: objects manifested on demand, pictures materialized from beyond the grave – even the teleportation across London of a particularly portly medium, Agnes Guppy, dressed

only in her nightgown. (Getting her home proved to be a harder task, but the spirits kindly provided a change of clothes.) All of a sudden, Home was yesterday's wonder.

But that moment, when he was at his lowest ebb, when he and his spirits had almost slipped out of sight, is when Home's story and his classicism take an unexpected turn. He turned to the ancient world again, but now his agenda was very different. Rather than attempting to compete on spectacle – or ever more elaborate 'materializations' – he pursued something much more elusive and potent: confidence. The creeping, clutching hands receded. The spirit of Socrates was never heard from again. Instead, in his final work, *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism*, Home placed himself within a tradition stretching back to the ancient world. 'When it was discovered [in ancient Greece] that only in the presence of certain persons could spirits manifest themselves, these mediums were set apart, and priesthood had its origin.'⁶³ His claims for ancient spiritualism are nothing if not sweeping: 'We learn from a hundred master-pieces of the intellect how untiring was that spirit of restless inquiry with which every people of Hellas searched into the secrets of the unseen [...]. The fiery imagination, and the intellect at once subtle and vigorous of the Greeks, peculiarly fitted them for the reception of impressions from the invisible world.'⁶⁴

In Home's tapestry of history and misdirection, there was nothing more real than miracles. The ancient world provided not only his origin-story, but also his storehouse of evidence. He urged the curious not to put their trust in Mrs Guppy, but in Pliny, Tacitus, Strabo and Suetonius⁶⁵ – in fact, the entire ancient canon. Even Alexander the Great pops up as an admirer of ancient spiritualism.⁶⁶

I shall cite now some instances of [ancient] phenomena strikingly similar to the phenomena occurring in our own day. The handling of live coals without injury – a manifestation which has frequently occurred to myself – was witnessed also in these ancient times. Strabo and Pliny unite in assuring us that in the reign of Augustus the priests of a temple at the foot of Mount Soracte dedicated to the goddess Feronia, had been known to walk bare-footed over great quantities of glowing embers ... That a mode of conversing with spirits by means of the alphabet was known and used in Roman times, the historian Ammianus Marcellinus proves.⁶⁷

Home sounded more like a classical scholar than as a Victorian wonder-worker. One moment, he was surveying the ancient historians: 'Pausanias, Plutarch, and a somewhat less trustworthy writer, Diodorus Siculus, are equally full of the supermundane, and equally

emphatic in asserting the veracity of the narratives they give.’⁶⁸ The next, he was discussing the work of some of the most prominent scholars of the day⁶⁹ and quoting Gaisford on the accuracy of Herodotus.⁷⁰ He had certainly come a long way from throwaway classical metaphors. But what was Home up to?

His agenda becomes even more puzzling when the nature of Home’s ancient spiritualists comes into focus: many of them are frauds of the worst kind. ‘It had been found in a long course of ages’, he wrote, ‘that the true spiritual phenomena were exhaustive, infrequent, and difficult to obtain. Attention was therefore directed to simulating them by falsehood, and priest after priest toiled with a misdirected ingenuity to invent or perfect the machinery of imposture. By the time of Augustus this system of deceit was in full flow. It continued so for centuries, decaying only with the decay of the Roman power itself. Exposures, doubtless, were less frequent than in our own age.’⁷¹ This all sounds strangely like *Punch*’s condemnation of the ‘Oracle of Delphi Company’: the rhetoric which was turned on Home to marginalize him after his humiliation in court. But when Home starts to draw lessons from ancient spiritualism for the modern world, *Lights and Shadows* starts to make much more sense. He condemns mediums both ancient and modern who ‘have degraded themselves and the noble cause to which they should be devoted, by the vilest and most unblushing fraud!’

How often, too, do we perceive a still lower class of impostors who, destitute of the slightest pretensions to mediumship, earn a shameful livelihood by the simulation of certain forms of spiritual phenomena! And what among the lives and teachings of the *flamens* who consented to deify Nero, could surpass in foulness the antic filthiness of a few creatures of our own age, who have introduced themselves like ghouls into the spiritual ranks, disgusting and repelling the pure-minded and the thoughtful?⁷²

In this world full of frauds who, then, can you trust? Why Home, of course. His séances were scientific inquiries – not the antic shuffling of his competitors:

Every teaching obtained through a medium should be tried by the most searching tests, and rejected or accepted as it bears the refining fires of common sense and reason. A spirit, on manifesting, may simply describe himself as John Smith, or may assure me that he is Socrates. Naturally I regard the humbler name with the less suspicion. It is, to my experience, a more probable thing that he should be an ordinary Englishman than a great Greek.⁷³

Given Home's encounter with the Parisian spirit of 'Socrates', one can hardly blame him for this.

In *Lights and Shadows*, the classical world was put to work: to exalt Home, and to destroy his competition. Just because a medium claimed to be following in the footsteps of antiquity did not, he insisted, mean that they could be trusted. Home reserved special scorn for 'those apers of antiquity who [...] have unearthed from their dusty receptacle the remaining relics of the Pythagorean system, and, clothing these with the fantasies of their own imaginations, have submitted to the notice of a bewildered world the identity-confounding chimaera of re-incarnation'.⁷⁴ Whether the theory of reincarnation actually had anything to do with Pythagoras is questionable – but Home is unstinting in his condemnation, labelling it 'this ancient folly'.⁷⁵ 'The spirit cannot, surely', he snorted, 'depart from earth a plain member of the Smith family, to return in a year or two a full-blown Alexander!'⁷⁶ For Home, of course, reincarnation was competition. It was no use him summoning faint voices from beyond the grave, if Alexander himself, freshly reincarnated, could sit in plain sight on your sofa, slurping tea. Small wonder, then, that Home was dismissive of the notion. 'I have', he noted, 'had the honour of speaking face to face with some six or seven Marys of Scotland [Mary, Queen of Scots] [...]. These "sad, discrowned queens" were of all ages and appearances, and the only thing difficult to discern amongst them was the slightest trace of anything queenly.'⁷⁷

'My aim', he wrote to friends about *Lights and Shadows*, 'was to expose the frauds and folly of certain knaves and fools. I have done so and it has been done as gently as possible.'⁷⁸ Home was not exactly gentle. He kept a private file of letters detailing the excesses of other mediums: one who 'kept carriage horses, had dresses of the most expensive sort, jewels of the greatest value and gave Champagne suppers and dances'.⁷⁹ Madame Blavatsky was 'monstrous' and possessed of 'horrible doctrines',⁸⁰ the famous Davenport brothers left a correspondent 'disgusted':

It is not entirely pleasant to say much about the Holmeses, but I feel that you are entirely right in your impression that they are impostors. My friend Robert Dale Owen, and many others beside myself, were taken in by their adroit fraud. We discovered that they hired a young woman named Eliza White to personate Katie King. I send you the papers containing an account of the exposure. [...] I never saw the Davenport boys but once, and was so disgusted by their rudeness and unspiritual conduct, that I did not go again.⁸¹

Home's aim was to (re)position himself at the centre of discourse,

and marginalize many of his fellow mediums. By this point in his life, he had seen the world from both sides. He had been lionized and he had been marginalized; he had eaten at the tables of royalty and been laughed out of the homes of the elite. He knew that the 'extreme', just like the 'central', was always a moving target. And in *Lights and Shadows*, Home set out to move it. He realized, in other words, something important: what counts as classics *in extremis* will always be a matter of perspective. The rhetoric of 'centre' and 'margins' is always artificial and inevitably privileges certain viewers, and certain areas of discourse. Those perspectives which get classed as 'extreme' are often (though, of course, far from always) those which were on the losing end of a power-struggle within discourse. For Home, who had spent much of his life trying to 'normalize' spiritualism, bringing it from the margins into the centre of Victorian society, classics was about power: acquiring it for himself, and taking it away from others. Classics *in extremis* was a game. And he was a grandmaster.

For the rest of his days, Home worked his wonders and kept his secrets. Even after his death, scholars – including prominent classicists – were seeking to learn from him.⁸² One of Home's most well-known admirers was Frederic W.H. Myers: classicist, Cambridge scholar and one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research. Myers wrote like a classicist and thought like a medium. For him, just as for Home, there was no dividing line between the scholarly pursuit of the ancient past and the psychic pursuit of the invisible present. Both demanded the same hopeful yet uncertain quest, conducted *in extremis*: a piling-up of fragments. Peace must be made with 'meaningless chaos', in the confidence that one day, it would be turned into order, and new understanding. When writing of classical scholarship, Myers could sound like a spiritualist; when writing of spiritualist investigation, he sounded like a classical scholar:

We are collecting, so to say, from palimpsest and mummy-case fragments of writing in many languages and in many alphabets. Some of these alphabets are still in use. Others are found in bilingual inscriptions, which give a clue to their significance. Others are as yet absolutely indecipherable. At first sight our ever-growing collection appears a meaningless chaos. But we are sure that there must be an order beneath the confusion, since from that order our modern world has grown. And enough is already interpretable to encourage us to further effort; to show us that we are in the presence of things ancient and wonderful, and of thoughts other than those we know.⁸³

The Victorian pursuit of 'fact' was a fundamentally slippery business.⁸⁴ Likewise, our pursuit of classics *in extremis* needs to

recognize the flexible, tricky nature of discourse: many characters slip from marginal to central (and back again) – and our judgements about their centrality or marginality are often dependent on the result of contemporary power-struggles, struggles which were hard fought and self-consciously engaged in. ‘History-making’, as the ‘spirit’ of Myers remarked, several years after his death, ‘is an art.’⁸⁵ Home stands between real and unreal, truth and lies. He embodies the contradictions of Victorian classicism, the difficulty of drawing a line between history and pseudo-history, the scholar and the fraud, the central and the marginal, *eros* denied and *eros* fulfilled, the classical and the new creation, the living and the dead, the extreme – and the rest.

What, then, should we say to Home’s hand, the hand that shook Victorian knowledge, and which no scholar could explain? Is it the hand of a miracle-worker, or a con-man? Is Home’s touch the touch of enlightenment, or of deception? Is his hand out of place here, still clinging to the ancient world over a century later, in a volume on classics *in extremis* – or is that exactly where it belongs? It might not be a welcome companion, but it is surely an appropriate one. For it is often in uncertainty – in questions which stubbornly remain open, in riddles which refuse to give up their secrets – that classical reception begins and ends its explorations. Home lived and thrived on that uncertainty. And his hand cannot be shaken off: if antiquity haunts modernity, Home haunts both. Long after Home’s death, the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* reported the visions of a certain Mrs Piper, who, ‘when in trance, dreams: dreams even of Julius Caesar, clad in helmet and armour, with a sword, flying in search of a Mexican cowboy; dreams of him so engaged in company, it would appear, with D. D. Home, Alexander the Great, Proteus and others.’⁸⁶ Or, as Home put it, in his commonplace-book: ‘What fools these mortals be!’⁸⁷

CHAPTER 6

PICTURING ANTIQUITY

PHOTOGRAPHY, PERFORMANCE AND JULIA MARGARET CAMERON

Jennifer Wallace

Among Julia Margaret Cameron's haunting images of the 1860s and 1870s are around fifty photographs on classical subjects. There are soft-focus portraits of scantily clad children under titles such as 'Love in Idleness' or 'Astyanax'. There are other portraits of young women, their hair loose and often decorated with floral wreaths or elaborate necklaces, with captions such as 'Circe', 'A Bacchante', 'Alethea' or 'Hypatia'. A few group portraits can be found, such as a kissing 'Cupid and Psyche' or 'Venus Chiding Cupid, and Depriving Him of His Wings', or a couple of versions of a re-enactment of the Parthenon sculptures known as the Elgin Marbles. And, while there are no specific dramatic stagings of particular scenes from classical literature along the lines that Cameron attempted for Shakespeare or Tennyson, there are a few pictures which might be considered to involve theatrical props and to be dramatic: the affecting five versions of 'Sappho', for example, or the intriguing, complex image of 'Cupid's Pencil of Light'.¹

Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs have been controversial ever since she first began exhibiting, only six months after first being given a camera, in 1864. Critics were divided about the merits of her work back then and she continues to polarize opinion today. Her classical body of work is no exception. While they have not previously been the subject of detailed critical attention in the way, for example, her images inspired by Tennyson have been, nevertheless when her photographs of 'Sappho', 'Circe' or 'A Bacchante' are shown to classical scholars for the first time, they seem to seduce and annoy viewers in equal measure.² Those deterred by the photographs speak of their generic vagueness, the lack of scholarly specificity and what they seem to consider their sentimental vulgarity. Those drawn in by

the photographs, on the other hand, are captivated almost by those very same features, the hybrid or palimpsestic layering of Victorian and classical features, and the self-conscious amateurism which paradoxically gives the images their vivacity and poignant ephemerality.³

These radically differing reactions to Cameron's photographs reflect the ambiguous character of the photographer herself. On the one hand, Cameron was very much a figure of the establishment, well connected to the most elite literary and artistic culture first in Calcutta and later in London, and with the benefits of a reasonable education for the time, a comfortable home life and a supportive and long-suffering husband and family. On the other hand, she was an outsider, both in the sense that she was treated with suspicion by the newly established professional circles of photographers and also that, like all women in the period, she had not received a formal classical education at school or university. She operated outside any institution, and her consequential resistance to orthodox categorization results in the confusing and polarizing nature of her images. Radically interrogating principles of taste and authority, Cameron's pictures challenge her viewers with questions, particularly relating to issues of scholarship, accuracy and authenticity, which go to the heart of the nature of classical reception in the nineteenth century, and explore, in a new medium and from an unexpected angle, the boundaries of what we might define as 'classical' at all.

Julia Margaret Pattle was born in India in 1815, the daughter of a civil servant in the British East India Company and granddaughter of French royalists. At the age of three, she was sent with her two older sisters to her grandmother in Versailles, France, for her education, such as it was, and upbringing. While she seems to have been largely unsupervised there, and certainly without any formal exposure to classical languages or culture, she was at the time of her marriage in 1838 proficient in French, Italian and Hindi and, since she later published a translation of Burger's *Leonora*, presumably she knew German too. She returned to India at the age of eighteen and went on to marry a lawyer, Charles Hay Cameron, who was stationed in Calcutta at the Law Commission, and she produced five children. While this might seem a somewhat conventionally respectable career, Charles Hay Cameron seems to have matched her free-spirited, artistic inclinations, bringing to the marriage his own interests in aesthetics and liberal reform, as well as a conventional classical education at Eton and Oxford. He published, in 1835, *Two Essays: On the Sublime and Beautiful and On Duelling*, the former reflecting his interest in eighteenth-century philosophy and the latter an almost comically rigorous 'crushing with the force of argument' the 'savage' recourse to

arms rather than the rule of law.⁴ The couple established themselves in the forefront of cultural life in Calcutta, Julia Margaret organizing social functions for the governor general. Partying continued, after they returned to London in 1848, at the salon which Julia Margaret Cameron's sister, Sarah Prinsep, hosted regularly at her home in Kensington. There they met some of the leading writers and artists of the day, including Alfred Lord Tennyson, the painter George Frederick Watts and the poet Henry Taylor. The friendship with the Tennysons led to the Camerons relocating to Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, to be close to the poet after he moved there. Not educated within any traditional institution, then, and lacking the rigour of a disciplined childhood more customary for her class, Julia Margaret Cameron was nevertheless well connected, with entrées to the chief literary and artistic spheres of England.

In December 1863, at the age of forty-eight, she was given a camera by her daughter. She had been taking an interest in the new invention of photography for some time, corresponding with the scientist John Herschel about his experiments with photographic processes since first meeting him in 1835, conversing with and sitting for some other photographers like Charles Dodson, otherwise known as Lewis Carroll, and possibly assisting and learning from the Swedish photographer Oscar Gustave Rejlander and from David Wilkie Wynfield. But in other respects, she was, in 1863, a novice and untested, the camera according to some suggestions an attempt to keep her entertained when her husband was absent. 'It may amuse you, Mother, to try to photograph during your solitude at Freshwater', supposedly were her daughter's words accompanying the gift, according to Julia Margaret Cameron's retrospective account.⁵ Certainly Julia Margaret Cameron's own portrayal of her artistic, photographic practice was one that emphasized the domestic, stereotypically feminine and amateurish nature of the process. As she recalled in her later autobiographical fragment 'Annals of My Glass House', itself an artful but unfinished piece of self-fashioning, she 'turned my coal-house into my dark room, and a glazed fowl house I had given to my children became my glass house!'.⁶ A portrait of Julia Margaret Cameron, before she acquired a camera, depicts her clasping two of her children close with one arm while with the other hand she attempts to write, quill pen in hand and ink pot close by.⁷ Yet, while performing femininity, Cameron was also subverting it, literally overturning its claustrophobic orthodoxy. She would run into the house to show her latest effort to her husband, colliding into furniture as she went: 'This habit of running into the dining-room with my wet pictures has stained such an immense quantity of table linen with nitrate of silver, indelible stains, that I should have been banished from any less indulgent household.'⁸

Indeed even her conversion of the henhouse into a studio seems to have been interpreted by her as a revolutionary act of emancipation and transformation. ‘The hens were liberated, I hope and believe not eaten’, she continued in the ‘Annals of My Glass House’. ‘All hands and hearts sympathised in my new labour, since the society of hens and chickens was soon changed for that of poets, prophets, painters and lovely maidens.’⁹

When Cameron began using her camera, which took 12 by 10 inch wet collodion glass plate negatives, the wet collodion process was still in development, having been invented just twelve years before, in 1851. Photography was a revolutionary medium. This was a period in which, as Victoria Olsen has pointed out, people were only just learning how to *look* at photographs, as well as to take them.¹⁰ The rules were being established and categories of judgement, taste and genre were still in the process of being defined. But in the twenty-year period, between 1851 and 1871, photographs became more popular, cheaper and more widely available – and photography as a *profession*, as opposed to an amateur hobby, took off. As many as 300–400 million *cartes de visite* (privately exchanged small photographic portraits, suitable for collection and display in family albums) were being sold each year between 1860 and 1867, and the public were therefore becoming accustomed to looking at and thinking about photographs.

The fierce debate concerning the artistic merits of photographs and the correct way in which they should be taken can be discerned in the critical reaction to Julia Margaret Cameron’s work. Remarkably, within six months of receiving her camera, she was exhibiting her work, at group shows at the Photographic Society of London, at the Photographic Society of Scotland, in December 1864, and in Dublin the following May. Her first solo show was mounted in July 1865 in London, at Messrs. Colnaghi and Co.’s, Pall Mall. The reviews were very mixed, ranging from warm adulation from some quarters for the artistic merits and originality of her portraits to harsh criticism from other quarters for her bad technique and amateurish ignorance of established photographic methods. According to the brief notice in the *Athenaeum* of her two pictures in the group show, ‘Mrs J.M. Cameron’s portraits ... are admirable, expressive, vigorous, but dreadfully opposed to photographic conventionalities and proprieties. They are the more valuable for being so’.¹¹ Even as early as this period, Cameron’s transgression of the newly established or even still being established orthodoxies was registered. For the *Athenaeum*, this was her chief virtue because she was opening up the possibilities of the medium. ‘These productions are made “out of focus” as the technical phrase is and, although sadly unconventional in the eyes of

photographers, give us hope that something higher than mechanical success is attainable by the camera', was the opinion of the reviewer the following month.¹² But professional practitioners, wanting to establish clear rules of how photographs should be taken and to carefully police the boundaries of the new medium, poured scorn upon the erroneous judgement of these ill-informed critics:

The art-critic of the *Atheneum*, in a recent notice of certain photographic portraits by Mrs Cameron, indulges in some observations which ... are highly complimentary to that lady; but we think they will be received with a smile of incredulity by photographers generally. If the critic in question knew anything practically of photography he would not surely insinuate that a photograph ought to be 'out of focus' in order to be effective. If the principle he seems to advocate be true, surely we have no need of first class opticians to construct our objectives.¹³

According to this writer, Cameron was held back by her lack of technical knowledge and good equipment, but 'with better optical and chemical means' she would be able to produce more conventional and supposedly therefore better quality images.

This debate among reviewers was about the character and status of the new medium of photography. The crux of the debate was really over whether photography was to be considered an art or a science. Did the camera somehow creatively conjure up a world or did it merely record it? In 1857, the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition had included photography with the fine arts, but five years later the International Exhibition in London placed photography in the section for machinery. When the subject matter was an imaginary or fictional one, this question became more vexed or tendentious. Historical painting was allowed to stray into the territory of fantasy but historical photography had to contend with the assumptions of realism or documentary accuracy associated with technology. How would the photographer deal with the question of illusion or artifice? And more specifically, how could Julia Margaret Cameron claim to portray antiquity through her new camera, given all these expectations of technical or historical accuracy, conventions of taste and nineteenth-century anxieties of belatedness?

In the mid-Victorian period, the new invention of photography seemed to promise a more immediate, objective and reliable access to the past. Here was the modern science of the present and future apparently aiding an accurate recovery of the past. Classicists, antiquarians and archaeologists were using the latest technology in terms of cameras to examine and record the material remains of ancient Greece. William Henry Fox Talbot photographed a plaster cast

of a marble bust from the Townley collection, known as 'Patroclus', in the 1840s. Roger Fenton, who became most famous for his images of the Crimean War in 1855, was commissioned the previous year to record items in the British Museum. And Schliemann famously photographed his wife wearing Helen's gold at the excavation of Troy in 1874.

In literary reception, too, photography became a useful trope by which to understand a new professional, business-like attitude to translation and classical philology. According to F.W. Newman, in the preface to his translation of the *Iliad*, British readers needed to be able to appreciate 'what the true Homer really was' and therefore the translation should be 'executed rather on the principle of the daguerreotype, than on fashionable portrait painting'.¹⁴ Paradoxically, since Newman's translation deliberately rendered Homer archaic and foreign to denote his primitive, alien cultural context, he drew upon the most innovative and mechanical metaphor currently available in the 1850s. Newman's translation, of course, became the main target of Matthew Arnold's attack in his lectures 'On Translating Homer'. Arnold bemoaned the fact that 'there exists too little of what I may call a public force of correct literary opinion' in British cultural life and that 'the impression which Homer makes upon the living scholar is not that of a poet quaint and antiquated but that of a poet perfectly simple, perfectly intelligible'.¹⁵ The debate was between literal translation and translation which attended to the spirit of the text, between, as Arnold put it, the 'philological' and the 'poetical' approach to translation, or characterized, in Newman's terms, as the opposition between photographic record and artistic invocation.¹⁶

But despite Newman's analogy here, the daguerreotype and photographs were far from unambiguously mechanical in their significance and effects. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's first encounter with the daguerreotype, for instance, seemed to produce a reaction in her that was close to religious awe:

My dearest Miss Mitford, do you know anything about that wonderful invention of the day, called the Daguerreotype? – that is, have you seen any portraits produced by means of it? Think of a man sitting down in the sun, & leaving his facsimile in all its full completion of outline & shadow, stedfast [*sic*] on a plate, at the end of a minute & a half! ... It is not merely the likeness which is precious in such cases – but the association, & the sense of nearness involved in the thing ... the fact of the *very shadow of the person* lying there fixed for ever! – It is the very sanctification of portraits I think – and it is not all monstrous in me to say what my brothers cry out against so vehemently, ... that I wd rather

have such a memorial of one I dearly loved, than the noblest Artist's work ever produced.¹⁷

For Barrett Browning, it was the materiality of the object – ‘the fact of the *very shadow of the person* lying there fixed forever’ – which produced a reverence that was almost like the devotion to a relic. But she combined this with a sense of the intimacy of the personal: ‘I would rather have such a memorial of one I dearly loved, than the noblest Artist's work ever produced’. She privileged the personal photograph over the public work of art, endowing it with sentimental love and attachment and marking, in so doing, her departure from her ‘brothers’.

Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs were, similarly, not mechanical translations of the past, or scientific representations, but rather seductive invitations to collaboratively imagine antiquity. This is most strikingly the case in ‘Cupid's Pencil of Light’ (Figure 6.1). This picture alludes to William Henry Fox Talbot's photo book, *Pencil of Nature* (1844–6), which had explained that ‘the picture makes itself’ and that light itself draws or writes the image, hence the term with its Greek origin: photography or light writing. But Cameron went one stage further by suggesting that love as well as light produces the image, and depicting Cupid's arrow transformed into a pencil and touching a glass photographic negative which reflects the light.¹⁸ This is in keeping with Cameron's description of her photographic practice as governed by erotic desire. ‘I handled my lens with a tender ardour, and it has become to me as a living thing, with voice and memory and creative vigour’, she observed in the ‘Annals of My Glass House’. The viewer is invited into the photograph by Cupid's seductive gesture. Just as the heart is traditionally wounded by Cupid's arrow and pierced with desire, so the pencil of light pricks the glass, which is dazzlingly blank with the possibility of future images. Love and light together can conjure up pictures of antiquity.



Figure 6.1 Julia Margaret Cameron. 'Cupid's Pencil of Light'. Model: Freddy Gould (1870). Copyright Royal Photographic Society/National Museum of Science & Media/Science & Society Picture Library – All rights reserved.

One can also read 'Cupid's Pencil of Light' within a wider context of Cameron's interest in photography as a new form of writing. She seems to have been explicitly exploring the extent to which her image making could be understood as a novel form of expression. Early photographic portraits of her showed her holding an open book, thus apparently combining her roles as writer and artist.¹⁹ In a letter in 1869 to Samuel Gray Ward, the American financier and art patron, and friend of Margaret Fuller and Emerson, she continued this metaphor of art as writing, noting that 'the history of the human face is a book we don't tire of if we can get its grand truths & learn them by heart'.²⁰ Portrait photography could be compared to history

writing or even epic poetry, the face read or written and the tableaux vivants like dramatic verse. It is significant in this regard that, when Julia Margaret Cameron took photos of her great friend and mentor, John Herschel, he was translating the *Iliad*. She did not depict him with book in hand, but she did take away some verses to read and share with friends. This provoked the idea that while Homer hymned the heroic exploits of Achilles and Hector, Herschel could somehow hymn the sublime achievements of photography and Cameron's magical harnessing of light and movement with her camera. She wrote to Herschel:

I wish *you* could in a special metre write a Divine Poem on Photography then indeed it would be lifted to the heights of Song & what the sun does for us in yielding to us in one Instant of Time the imperishable Treasure of a faithful Portrait deserves your sweet Muses's sweetest serious words.²¹

The debt between literature and photography was becoming mutual in Cameron's imagination. While the new possibilities of photography, or light writing, were to be accorded poetic praise, reciprocally the camera could create a portrait with the nobility of epic heroism or a tableau with literary sophistication and allusiveness. So as well as emphasizing the role of desire in the viewing and taking of photographs, 'Cupid's Pencil of Light' draws attention to its own medium. The subject of the photograph is the capture and production of images. On the blank glass, which reflects the light in blinding fashion, the viewer can imagine the reproduction or replication of the image in the photograph but shrunk to that smaller size, like an endless regression of receding, diminishing mirrors. As photographic and classical reception is reflected back, from lens to glass and back again, the viewer is asked to contemplate the very medium of expression, the photograph as both vehicle and object of the erotic allure of antiquity.

Julia Margaret Cameron's pictures of the Greeks were of course also highly theatrical. Her models were selected for their willingness to dress up in costume – or in the case of Freddy Gould, the model for 'Cupid's Pencil of Light', undress – and sit in character for long periods of time. In demanding this of her models, Cameron was not unusual for her time. David Wilkie Wynfield, the photographer in the so-called St John's Wood group with whom Cameron corresponded and apparently took a lesson, dressed his models up as Jacobean, to give them a historical gravitas.²² Cameron was very interested in theatre herself. She built her own theatre in the garden at Freshwater, near her studio, and regular performances involving the Camerons and the Tennysons were put on there.²³ This was a period, however, when

amateur dramatics enjoyed an ambiguous reputation.²⁴ The theatre's potential association with deception and immorality, for instance, was explored in Austen's *Mansfield Park*, where the objections to the Bertrams' and the Crawfords' staging of *Lovers' Vows* seem to be based partly upon the disordering of the great house and the violation of the father's rules but also upon the charge of inauthenticity. The characters, especially Edmund Bertram and Maria Crawford, are liberated to perform an openness and impulsiveness which social norms would typically forbid them to express, and thus the amateur theatricals give rise to confusion inherent in playing a part in which confession and expression are both licensed in performance and yet performatively insincere. Similarly, for the harshest critics of the time, it was the artifice of the fashion for theatrical tableaux in early photography which caused some of the main anxiety and consternation:

You may find some wonderful young woman, and wrap her up artfully in a blanket, and pose her voluptuously, and arrange daintily her taper fingers, and call her 'Summer', but it won't do ... The lady isn't Summer; there is strong evidence somewhere that she is still Miss Jane Brown or Sophie Smith, and the drapery is a blanket, and all the rest of the thing as it *was* and not what you wish it to *appear* to be. Photography is too truthful – all your dodges are found out – you are an imposter, a mere conjuror, and no true artist at all.²⁵

As well as insincerity, amateur theatricals were also associated with charges of vulgarity, some problematic and deceitful conjuring trick appealing to our baser instincts. We might think, for example, about the ambivalent reaction to Emma Hamilton's 'Classical Attitudes' in Naples, a form of private performance in which Emma Hamilton imitated Greek vase painting and statuary in a series of theatrical vignettes. While alluding to classical high taste – her husband Sir William Hamilton, ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples, was, of course, one of the greatest collectors of antiquities at the time – and performing for the cultural establishment who visited, the performance was also reported to be a form of erotic, private titillation, with Emma's earlier career as maid, society hostess, actress and mistress latently associated with the particular theatrical pleasures.

Theatrical photography by the mid-Victorian period, similarly, could be considered as 'soft-core pornography masquerading as fine art', as Malcolm Daniel put it, with the veneer of classical art giving the male spectator permission to look.²⁶ Oscar Gustave Rejlander's 'The Two Ways of Life' (1857) became a notorious case in point. The

picture showed two young men in the centre, each turning towards a different career path represented by the tableaux vivants in front of him: the man on the right looks towards the chastely clad groups of men and women studiously reading or earnestly labouring; the man on the left listens to the siren call of naked women luxuriously lounging in front of him. The moral dilemma depicted in the photograph was eclipsed by the moral ambiguity associated with viewing it, for it was assumed that prostitutes must have been used for the nude models and that the young man's attraction to a life of sinful pleasure must be necessarily shared by the spectator of the image. The controversy over the picture split the Photographic Society of Scotland but meanwhile Queen Victoria ordered a ten-guinea copy of the photograph for Prince Albert, impressed by the subject matter and its supposedly principled message. The review in the *Journal of the Photographic Society* testified to the moral complexities of the photograph and the veneer of classical art that made viewing it acceptable:

The quasi-sentimentalism about the indelicacy of the picture, we have no patience to discuss; it would seem that anything which bears with it the impress of antiquity, however lewd or indelicate, is idealised into classicism, whilst anything like an attempt to elucidate an idea in the present moral age, if only bordering on the nude, is at once condemned as indelicate.²⁷

The blurred significance of 'The Two Ways of Life' or of the 'Classical Attitudes' as both high art and vulgar tease – the paradox given further prominence by Keats's provocative deconstructing 'Oh Attic shape! Fair attitude!' – can be detected in Julia Margaret Cameron's staging of antiquity in her photographs.²⁸ Admittedly, she did not tease with the use of nudity or prostitutes as models like her male counterparts. Indeed, her photographs might be said to look at antiquity with a maternal eye, rather than with the erotic gaze of the lover.²⁹ Her images of 'Cupid and Psyche' or of 'Circe' use child models, infantilizing the myths and appealing to a sentimental rather than a sexual notion of love and seduction. Of course, it has been argued that Cameron's 'Madonna' images actually 'smear the lines between sexual and not sexual', but they seem to me strikingly desexualized, transforming carnal classical mythology into images of maternal tenderness and haptic care.³⁰ In this respect, her work can be compared to that of Felicia Hemans, who transformed Byron's radically provocative, erotic treatments of Greece in his poems into maternalized, sentimental and more conservative renditions.³¹ However, Cameron did provocatively revel in the 'mere conjur[ing]' tricks condemned in the review in *Photographic Notes* quoted earlier.

Her five portraits of her servant Mary Hillier as ‘Sappho’ are particularly striking for this (Figure 6.2). In two of these portraits, Mary Hillier’s fingers play upon a strange bamboo/string contraption as if it were a musical instrument. While the prop was no doubt actually the back of a garden chair or maybe a fence, the impression is of either a lyre or the pan pipes, or maybe some strange conflation of the two. If, traditionally, the lyre becomes the synecdoche of Sappho, the material trace of a voice which is forever lost and filled in by her readers, so here the lyre which is not a lyre becomes the sign of the identity and supposed authenticity of the model, ensuring the Sapphonicity of Mary Hillier who of course was never a lyric poet, but who teasingly performs her proximity to the lyrical sounds of the past just as the photographer conjures up and freezes this approximation.³²



The other three 'Sappho' portraits offer even fewer props or identifiable signs of the role the model is playing. Mary Hillier wears a loose, embroidered dress and metallic necklace, and her hair is gathered loosely at the back, thus suggesting a generic, orientalized figure with the freedom of a poet or artist. But in other respects, there is nothing specific to indicate that this is a picture of the sixth century BC Lesbian poet. Contemporary reviews actually pointed this out as an objection to the work. The critic in the *Intellectual Observer*, in an otherwise very positive appreciation of the work, admitted that 'in some of these cases, we do not find ourselves able to follow the suggestions given by Mrs Cameron in naming her pieces, the Greek ones especially seem to us, as a rule, to have much more of the character of medieval Italy'.³³ Yet it was precisely because there was no attempt at verisimilitude or theatrical realism that Cameron's classical images are so intriguing. The caption and the image jostle disturbingly against one another, questioning the relationship between antiquity and modernity, the definition of what makes something 'classical' and the nature of so-called classical reception. This was simultaneously the hypothetical Miss Jane Brown *and* Summer – or in Cameron's case Mary Hillier *and* Sappho. The single image was modern and antique at one and the same time. Moreover, by using the decontextualized, dream-like close-up, Cameron was able to suggest the inner thoughts of the model. What being Sappho meant was internalized; this was arguably antiquity as *feeling* rather than as outward sign. The fact that Cameron's model was working class, her servant, made this departure all the more provocative. Within the world that Cameron conjured up through her camera, classes were blurred and not important. By capturing the inner life of the model, she suggested that feeling or emotion transcended time or culture or class.³⁴

The Sappho pictures were thus both self-consciously aware of the medium – the inadequate illusion of the prop as lyre – and yet also resisted the medium by suggesting that some meaning or Hellenic character was withheld, internalized within the mind or the heart. Antiquity was simultaneously present and absent. Other classical images show a similar ambiguous hybridity. Five-year-old Freddy Gould, the son of a fisherman, also posed naked for an upper-body, close-up portrait of 'Astyanax' (1866). Kate Keown, the nine-year-old daughter of a military officer stationed on the Isle of Wight, was used for a head portrait of 'Circe' (1865), indicated externally only by the bunch of large grapes apparently draped over her loose hair. A close-up picture of a 'Bacchante' (1867) used the orphaned Cyllena Wilson,

whom the Camerons had adopted, in a low cut dress and flowers in her loosened hair. Mary Hillier also performed as 'Clio' (1866), in another embroidered dress, and as Psyche to Elizabeth Keown's baby Cupid (1864–5). There were also portraits of Alice Liddell as 'Alethea' (1872), with long loose hair against a background of greenery and flowers, and of Mrs Keene as 'Cassiopeia' (1866), a shadowy close-up portrait that looks out of its dark background with large appealing eyes. Marie Spartali, the daughter of the Greek consul in London, dressed up in a white, tunic-like dress with crossed, leather lacing weaving a pattern up the arms, to pose as Hypatia (1868). Like the Sappho portraits, these pictures brought together people of different classes and backgrounds to pose both as themselves and as mythical figures from antiquity, throwing into question the process of representing the past.

Cameron's portraits also interrogate the sources of classical knowledge: Which past is being represented anyway? 'Circe', for example, is a strangely hybrid image ([Figure 6.3](#)). The obvious source in the *Odyssey* is made more complicated by Cameron's quotation from Milton's *Comus* on the mount of the photo: 'Who knows not Circe/daughter of the sun'.³⁵ Milton compares Circe to Bacchus just a few lines prior to this quotation and Cameron subtly references this comparison with her use of the prop of grapes on her model's head. She would not have been immune, either, to the contemporary association of Circe with seduction and prostitution or to the female perspective which prompted Augusta Webster's dramatic monologue five years later.³⁶ The portrait of 'Oenone' (1870), a shadowy profile, must have owed its origins to Tennyson's dramatic monologue about the lover who was abandoned by Paris when he eloped with Helen and who appears to foresee the destruction of Troy.³⁷ 'Cupid and Psyche' was probably as much inspired by Mary Tighe's poem 'Psyche' (1805) and Keats's 'Ode to Psyche' (1820) as it was to Apuleius. 'Balaustion' (1871) ([Figure 6.4](#)), using Cameron's daughter-in-law, Anne Chinery, as a model, is particularly interesting. Adorned with big, metallic earrings and long shawl over her head and loosened hair, the model is as simultaneously modern and antique as the narrator in Robert Browning's dramatic monologue and adaptation of Euripides's *Alcestris*, entitled *Balaustion's Adventure*. Cameron had photographed Browning in 1870, and it seems likely that they discussed the work, in which the Greek narrator Balaustion recalls acting in a theatrical production of *Alcestris*, since both Browning's poem and Cameron's portrait were published or printed the following year.³⁸ 'Hypatia' (1868) was no doubt indebted to Charles Kingsley's novel which was serialized in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1852–53. And 'Zoe, Maid of Athens', which used Cameron's niece May Prinsep as a model, was directly

inspired by Byron's poem, 'Maid of Athens'.³⁹



Figure 6.3 Julia Margaret Cameron. 'Circe'. Model: Kate Keown (1865). Copyright Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 6.4 Julia Margaret Cameron. 'Balaustion'. Model: Anne Chinery Cameron (1871). Copyright The Art Institute of Chicago/Art Resource, NY.

So Cameron's pictures of the Greeks actually involved picturing self-consciously the Romantics' and Victorians' depictions of the Greeks: Browning, Tennyson, Byron, Kingsley. She was not so much going back to the ancient sources of literature as relying on popular mythology and the latest literary currents, rather as Keats had done a generation earlier with his notorious reliance on Lemprière's Dictionary or Chapman's Homer. As well as revelling in the hybridity of the image in terms of its temporality, therefore, Cameron was also making a virtue of the mediating sources for her knowledge of antiquity. Not only mingling literal nineteenth-century realism with ancient mythology and role-playing, she also combined recent poetry

and fiction with more indirect allusions to literary tradition. Her own belatedness, and that of her age, was crucial to the meaning of the depicted image.

Cameron's sense of belatedness, in her pictures of antiquity, adds a further dimension to the well-known 'out-of-focus' debate surrounding her work. The new professionals in the developing industry in the 1860s – both the practitioners and the critics – were using the technique of focus as a way of policing the boundaries of this new establishment. Knowing how to use one's camera 'properly', knowing the recently developed or invented rules of composition, light and focus, was to join the inner circle of acceptable image-makers. Violating these rules, conversely, was to exile oneself irrevocably from the circle, to 'undermine the whole patriarchal structure of Victorian society', according to one critic, or at least to throw conventional orthodoxies into some confusion.⁴⁰ 'Surely the Council might have exercised a little more supervision over the admission of the specimens', expostulated the critic in *The Photographic Journal* of 15 August 1864, when viewing the annual exhibition of the Photographic Society in Pall Mall.⁴¹ And a year later, the reviewer continued to be concerned:

Of Mrs Cameron, we are sorry to say, we have very little hope ... We are sorry to speak in condemnation of a Lady's work; but these photographs have been put prominently forward, and we should be doing an injustice to photography to let them pass as examples of good art or perfect photography.⁴²

However, whether Cameron shot out-of-focus inadvertently or deliberately, the long-term effect and – arguably – purpose was to call into question the orthodox perspective upon image-making and to think about alternative ways of viewing the act of representation.⁴³ 'What is focus and who has the right to say what focus is legitimate focus?' she observed early in her photographic career in a letter to Herschel.⁴⁴ Challenging the consensus on how to photograph, and even challenging the process by which a consensus or orthodoxy could be formed, Cameron was developing a different kind of vision, one which seemed to be interested in the tricks and quirks of sight and of the imagination. Only those non-professional critics could recognize this experimentation:

By adopting the out-of-focus mode of representation, we hold that this lady exchanges ... 'sharpness' ... for a far truer principle of rendering objects, especially of living and moving ones, so as to accord with that impression which the mind receives not through a one-eyed camera but through a binocular apparatus. Only by

this principle, too, can photography in any sort compete with some of the most essential qualities of art.⁴⁵

While many of Cameron's pictures of the 'Greeks' adopted this out-of-focus technique – and her 'Cupid and Psyche', 'Cassiopeia' and 'Balaustion' have already been particularly noted in this regard – her two images of the 'Elgin Marbles' are of special interest. For these were pictures not of the statues per se, in the manner of Fox Talbot or Fenton, but theatrical performances of statuary, highlighting both the effort to keep still like a statue and the impossibility of ever completely doing so. We see Cyllene Wilson and Mary Hillier struggling to hold the pose ([Figure 6.5](#)), representing the headless figures of Artemis and Aphrodite from the Parthenon's east pediment. Cameron makes the famous fragments whole by using models from her own household. She fills in the object of desire and draws attention to that process of filling in as she does so. This was, of course, a period when the Elgin Marbles were going through a renewed popularity, not along the lines of the Romantic celebration of their sublime fragmentation but rather restored to their original state of completion and sometimes even colour. George Frederick Watts was painted standing in front of the Parthenon frieze.⁴⁶ The marble frieze, copied and re-designed by Decimus Burton in dazzling blue and white, was added to the new Athenaeum Club building on Pall Mall in 1830. Wallpaper, decorated with a frieze based on the marbles, was given by Julia Margaret Cameron as a present to Tennyson.⁴⁷



Figure 6.5 Julia Margaret Cameron. 'Teachings from the Elgin Marbles'. Models: Cyllena Wilson and Mary Hiller (1867). Copyright Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

But while these works made a virtue out of the commodification of the antique object, Cameron's photographs focused on her portraits as subjects, not objects. The extent to which her models were living, breathing and trying but failing not to move became part of the significance and effect of 'Teachings from the Elgin Marbles'. The closeness and, simultaneously, the distance between classical sculpture and photography became the point of interest in the image. In other words, the challenges and shortcomings of the new medium – photography – were the subject matter and were celebrated. While writers on photography, such as Peter Wollen or Christian Metz, have

traditionally drawn our attention to the static nature of the medium, a moment frozen in time, recently some critics have raised the alternative interpretation of it as an elusive, fleeting and fluid process.⁴⁸ 'Performance is the art form which most fully understands the generative possibilities of disappearance', according to Peggy Phelan. 'The performative nature of portrait photography complicates the traditional claims of the camera to reproduce an authentic "real"'.⁴⁹ Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs of the 'Teachings from the Elgin Marbles' draw attention to the appearance and disappearance both of solid fragmentary remains and of living, breathing and performing bodies. This, indeed, may be what is being 'taught', that the simultaneous impossibility and desirability of capturing the past – encapsulated here in the theatrical re-creation of famous statues – can paradoxically be 'generative', in Phelan's words, that failure, vulgarity and artifice can give rise to art. As the writer in the *Intellectual Observer* commented about Cameron's photos:

There is no dead mechanism of mere photography here, but emphatically a work of art, instinct with life and motion. The hair flows freely, as if the breeze had caught it, the outlines are soft and melting, the play of light on the blooming features marvellous to behold.⁵⁰

Julia Margaret Cameron offers, then, a double, 'binocular' vision in her photographs of the reception of antiquity, one which is comparable to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'full-veined, heaving, double-breasted age' in *Aurora Leigh*. Both photographer and poet could 'startle the artistic spectator with a thrill of strange delight',⁵¹ as the awkwardness of their imagery – whether that be Cameron's failures and blurrings, or Barrett Browning's inverted classical allusions and metaphors – bore testimony to the 'strange' distance from, and intimacy with, the classical subjects in their work.⁵²

Julia Margaret Cameron was an ambiguous figure in that she converted marginality, feminine amateurism and technical failure into a positive art form, revelling in the subversion of orthodoxy and her own outsider/insider status. But this becomes an embodied metaphor for classical reception itself, making visible the elusiveness of the past and the clumsy, performative attempts to capture it. Just as the photograph might be said to trace the 'movement from presence to absence', teasing the viewer with the suggestion that the object is just out of reach, palpable and yet already lost (and indeed the use of photography in the Victorian period for the process of mourning the dead and apparently re-capturing ghosts, the undead, has been well documented), so Cameron's images of the 'ancient Greeks' evoke a double absence – lost antiquity and the lost presence of her long-

suffering model – even as they appear to conjure both up before us more vividly and vitally than ever before. Generically emptied out, the images nevertheless startle us with the vivacity and specificity of *this* particular model, *this* moment in time, visibly fleeting in its blurred effect. These contradictions – innovative and ambivalent – make palpably real to us the paradoxes of female encounters with classical antiquity and the unacknowledged assumptions, blind spots and insights exhibited by writers and readers in general in the nineteenth century.⁵³ By looking at Cameron's work, which opens up the boundaries between authority and subversion, between supposed authentic classical feeling and unabashed belated modernity, we can re-think definitions of classics and classical reception and explore a wider and more diverse notion of our relation with antiquity.

CHAPTER 7

HIGH CULTURE IN LOW COMPANY?

THE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT 'HOMOSEXUALITY' IN THE PORNOGRAPHIC *THE SINS OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN*

Jennifer Ingleheart

The Sins of the Cities of the Plain is an anonymous pornographic novel of 1881.¹ It depicts a variety of sexual encounters, but for the most part purports to be 'The Recollections of a Mary-Ann', or male prostitute, one 'Jack Saul',² whose strong preference for sex is with men, which he terms 'the pederastic game'.³ The text of the novel concludes, somewhat surprisingly, with three short essays, headed 'The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts', 'Essay on Sodomy, etc.' and 'Tribadism'.⁴ The essays in these final two sections treat these phenomena more widely, but pay much attention to ancient Rome as a society in which sodomy between men was 'one of the most important ... vices and amusements', and in which tribadism 'flourished'; these essays name Juvenal, Martial and Suetonius as witnesses for Roman *mores* and offer an extended survey of the sex lives of the emperors that is clearly indebted to the last of these authors.⁵ While some attention has been paid to the novel 'proper' by scholars with interests in the history of sexuality and in pornographic fiction,⁶ all three concluding essays have been almost entirely overlooked, save for the fascinating suggestion of Collette Colligan that they may have provided a model for Sir Richard Burton's famous and seminal 1885–6 'Terminal Essay' on pederasty,⁷ a work which has been labelled the first well-known Anglophone study of homosexuality.⁸ In looking back to antiquity when discussing modern same-sex acts and desires, the essays are certainly in dialogue with, and in many cases anticipate, not only Burton's work, but other contemporary, or near-contemporary, works.⁹ These essays thus constitute an important part of the Victorian reception of same-sex

eroticism in the ancient world, yet they have been entirely neglected by classicists. Such treatment can be attributed to the fact that the essays appear within a work which is frankly pornographic¹⁰: they have escaped the attention of classicists by virtue of belonging to a subliterate genre and a sexual subculture.¹¹

However, despite, or perhaps *because of*, their openly pornographic generic affiliations, the essays offer a new and valuable perspective on Victorian treatments of sexuality in antiquity.¹² This chapter, then, analyses the intersection between this text, more mainstream Victorian responses to ancient 'homosexuality' and pornography and probes the tension between the cultural prestige of classics in Victorian Britain and the reception of classical material within the doubly marginalized and stigmatized genre of homosexual pornography.¹³ Important questions that shape my study include: What are 'essays' treating classical material doing in this company? What do the classics look like in this context, and how do the essays treat their ancient sources? How might the author of the essays have imagined that readers would respond? In what ways are the essays' reception of classics in dialogue with other responses to antiquity in the same period, and how can this reception of the classics shed new light on how the Victorian age engaged with the classical world and conceived of homosexual roles and behaviours? The essays are obviously marginal on a number of levels – by virtue of their pornographic genre and milieu, as well as in terms of their engagement with texts and authors that appear heavily sanitized in other contemporary receptions – and their marginality matters. As we shall see, it can prompt us to ask whether our usual models of Victorian reception of ancient sexuality are adequate and to probe the extent to which apparently marginal receptions might be more widely representative.

In order to answer these questions, I briefly outline the background to the text, its publication, putative authorship and contents. The chapter then moves to set these essays within their broader cultural and historical context, exploring the crossover between pornography and classical material; there follows a detailed study of the essays themselves, their placement within the text and their engagement with their classical sources, topics which form the core of this chapter. My conclusion explores the wider consequences and further questions for the history of classical reception studies and for queer studies that this neglected text is capable of opening up.

Our text was first privately published in 1881 in a now lost edition of either 250 or 150 copies,¹⁴ with a title page that advertised it as '*The Sins of the Cities of the Plain, or The Recollections of a Mary-Ann. With Short Essays on Sodomy and Tribadism*'; the earliest copy of the

work that now survives is a two-volume reprint from around 1891. It carries the same indication of its contents on its title page, and advertises that it is one of ‘Only 250 copies printed’ in two volumes; it sold well enough to be reprinted again in 1896, and again in around 1902 (in editions which give no indication of the print runs).¹⁵ The novel was thus quite widely distributed for a pornographic work of the day,¹⁶ and it will have sold well at least in part because it drew upon the Boulton-Park scandal (see below), and purported to contain the memoirs of Jack Saul, who shares a name with a man of that profession who gave evidence in the Cleveland Street homosexual scandal of 1889–90.¹⁷ It has a good claim to be the first pornographic novel of the Victorian age in which homosexual encounters form the main theme, although its participation in the wider culture of Victorian pornography is shown by its inclusion of many of that genre’s staple elements, such as flagellation, lesbian titillation and group sex. Its place within this culture is also suggested by the identity of its publisher, William Lazenby, who sometimes used the suggestive pseudonym ‘D. Cameron’, and was prolific in issuing smut, to the extent that he had a virtual monopoly on its publication in England for a long period starting in 1873.¹⁸ Lazenby correctly anticipated a wide enough market for a novel which could be marketed as appealing to special interests: it was allegedly sold to Oscar Wilde as an example of a ‘Socratic’ work.¹⁹ However, the advertised price of four guineas for the 1881 edition, and publication in two volumes (at least in the c. 1891 reprint), suggest strongly that it was aimed at the well-to-do upper- and middle-class men who were the usual consumers of such erotica.²⁰

The anonymous author of the text has been tentatively identified with the writer and collector of pornography, James Campbell Reddie (1807–78). This identification has been made by Patrick Kearney on the basis of a story in Lazenby’s pornographic magazine *The Pearl* from 1880,²¹ in which a ‘Mr Reddie’, who ‘couldn’t even bear for a woman to touch him’, courts ‘serious trouble’ (presumably with his blatant homosexual behaviour),²² falls ‘in love’ with a ‘good looking boy’ of around fifteen, seduces him and later involves him in a threesome that also includes the story’s male narrator.²³ One small piece of evidence, to date overlooked, in favour of this identification, and relevant to the text’s classical reception, is the description of Reddie by Henry Spencer Ashbee as ‘without the advantage of a university education ... read[ing] with ease Latin, French and Italian’.²⁴ This could account for the essays’ familiarity with Latin authors and translations – often close – of Suetonius;²⁵ furthermore, Reddie’s attested knowledge of Latin, but not Greek, would provide one (albeit highly prosaic) explanation for the absence of references to

ancient Greece in the essays (a topic to which I will return).

However, against the identification of Reddie as the author, 'speaking' names which suggest the sexual proclivities of the characters who bear them are common in Victorian pornography.²⁶ We may therefore detect simply another example of this sort in *The Pearl's* 'Mr Reddie', who tells the narrator of the story: 'I must fuck that boy or go out of my mind from frigging myself as I lay in bed and think of him';²⁷ this is a man who is more than ready for sex. Furthermore, Reddie cannot have been the *sole* author of at least part of our text,²⁸ for there is a reference within one of the three final sections to a newspaper article that postdates Reddie's death.²⁹ Peter Mendes posits that Reddie's co-author may have been the artist Simeon Solomon, who had been convicted of sex with another man in a Marylebone public toilet in 1873, and was in desperate need of money at the time of our text's publication; the essays' interest in tribadism would certainly be in dialogue with Solomon's fascination with the Greek poetess Sappho, although Solomon's involvement is made less likely by the complete, and surprising, lack of references to Sappho and ancient Greece in the essay on tribadism.³⁰ It has more recently been suggested that the novel's publisher, Lazenby, was also the author of the essays appended to it,³¹ and the possibility that this is the case is strengthened by his identification as the author of the novel marketed as its sequel, *Letters from Laura and Eveline* (1883).³²

Whatever the identity of the extratextual pornographer responsible for our text, the internal author of the majority of the text is clearly marked as the prostitute Jack Saul, who, at the start of the text, is picked up by Mr Cambon, a wealthy client, and paid by him to write out his 'whole history'.³³ For the most part, the text comprises these recollections as provided by Saul, in accordance with the advertisement provided by its title page, which also suggests that the text does not have a straightforward, coherent or unified structure. It is in fact even more of a ragbag than the title implies³⁴: Saul's reminiscences are split into various subsections, including one headed 'Some frolics with Boulton and Park', which relate Saul's sexual adventures with a cross-dressing pair who had been the subjects of a notorious legal case a decade before our text's publication, and to whom I will return; another section, entitled 'Further Recollections and Incidents', contains Saul's version of the experiences of fellow 'members of the Mary-Ann profession' as reported to him.³⁵ Before the essays on sodomy and tribadism, a further section entitled 'The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts' opens with claims about Roman sexual *mores* that mirror those found in the essays, and this suggests that it is to be grouped together with them. The essays themselves and the section which precedes them are only marked off from the main

text, and Saul's recollections, by their headings. No author for these final three sections is indicated; that these sections depart from the format of personal recollections of Saul's life as a prostitute might suggest that they are not to be read as part of this account, and we might posit instead that their fictional author is supposed to be the gentleman, Mr Cambon, who is presented as the editor of Saul's work, and the 'writer of these notes' that make up the initial frame for Saul's recollections.³⁶ Furthermore, despite connections between the essays and the recollections, which this chapter will examine, the essays' interest in Roman material makes them stand out from the recollections proper, which are overwhelmingly concerned with the experiences of men who have sex with other men in Victorian London.³⁷

Although the inclusion of several 'essays' with a major focus on ancient Roman sexual *mores* is unparalleled in other Victorian pornographic novels, the formal variety of our text matches that of other pornographic productions of the age: we might compare Lazenby's short-lived magazine *The Pearl* (1879–80), which was shut down as obscene after only a few issues. Its pages contain an even more hectic blend of material, incorporating fictional stories, alleged personal erotic reminiscences, songs, parodies, dirty jokes and illustrations. Furthermore, our text's conjunction of pornography and the classics is far from lacking precedent. Classical scholars have recently begun to probe the crossover between pornography and classical reception, and, above all, the reception of Rome, which has long played the role of a 'pornotopia', or 'ideal setting for the activities described in pornographic literature', in the words of the *OED*.³⁸ I argue elsewhere that the ancient world, and Rome in particular, forms a crucial element of the picture of homosexual love found in *Teleny* (1893), the other major Victorian homosexual pornographic novel, and, taken together with our novel, *Teleny* suggests that the classics play a more important role in 'homosexual' pornographic novels than in predominantly heterosexual works.³⁹ This can be attributed to the prominent role that the classics have played throughout history in constructions of homosexuality; the classics and homosexuality are even more firmly intertwined and mutually implicated than the classics and pornography.⁴⁰

The major role played by Rome in the essays appended to our novel, however, comes as rather a surprise to the reader after the novel itself, where a very few, utterly conventional classicizing references give no hint of the importance of Rome later in the text: so, for example, Jack Saul has an 'Adonis-like' figure and a 'priapus nearly ten inches long', in the pornographic parlance (and fantasies) of the day.⁴¹ This chapter's introduction asked what 'essays' treating classical material

are doing in this company, and at the simplest level, one answer lies in the long association between the classics and pornography. However, this hardly begins to explain what the reader was supposed to have made of the essays, nor why their classical material was not integrated into Saul's recollections, in contrast to *Teleny*, where (for example) the lovers play the roles of the Roman emperor Hadrian and his beloved Antinoüs.⁴²

We have already seen that there is a lack of explicit explanation for the essays' presence in this text and for the departure that they constitute from Saul's reminiscences. To better understand the role played by these essays, we must turn to the section of the novel which prefaces Saul's recollections with an introduction in the voice of Mr Cambon, who picks up Jack Saul near Leicester Square. Mr Cambon has an interest in sex which goes beyond merely taking handsome streetwalkers back home, as is shown by the very last of his motives for approaching Saul:

That lump in his trousers had quite a fascinating effect upon me. Was it natural or made up by some artificial means? If real, what size when excited; how I should like to handle such a manly jewel, etc.⁴³ All this ran through my mind, and determined me to make his acquaintance, in order to unravel the real and naked truth; also, if possible, to glean what I could of his antecedents and mode of life, which I felt sure must be extraordinarily interesting.⁴⁴

In this passage (as in a later passage to which we shall soon turn), sex itself and discourse *about* sex are intimately entwined; both are erotic, with important implications for the essays. This early passage puts knowledge about sex on an erotic level with sex itself: Mr Cambon desires to have carnal knowledge of Jack Saul, but he also has a strong imperative to get to know about Saul's life as a male prostitute. Both sex itself and sexual knowledge or discourse about sex are thereby presented as arousing,⁴⁵ and the essays are thus part of the titillation that the text as a whole provides for the reader.⁴⁶

While it might be hard for the modern reader to see the erotic potential of the essays, the author of our text may have been inspired to incorporate them into a pornographic novel by the example of the 1868 *Index Expurgatorius*, an anonymous translation which claimed to provide versions of all of Martial's poems which the recent, mainstream Bohn translation had omitted as obscene;⁴⁷ the versions and accompanying notes include learned, graphic and sometimes fanciful disquisitions on all kinds of ancient sexual practices, explicitly aligning them with contemporary customs and behaviours.⁴⁸ The *Index* provides a sustained engagement with Martial which is in some

ways scholarly,⁴⁹ but it was marketed and sold as pornography,⁵⁰ and may have suggested to the author of our text that essays taking a 'scholarly' tone and approach towards Roman sex would appeal to consumers of pornography.⁵¹

A further key to the presence of the essays in this pornographic novel is found at the end of Mr Cambon's introduction to Saul's memoirs:

Of course at each visit we had a delicious turn at bottom-fucking, but as the recital of the same kind of thing over and over again is likely to pall upon my readers, I shall omit a repetition of our numerous orgies of lust, all very similar to the foregoing, and content myself by a simple recital of his adventures.⁵²

What are we to make of the startling suggestion that the reader of this work would not be interested in the specifics of later sexual encounters between the narrator and Jack Saul? After all, an important part of pornography is the description (albeit with variation) of what are essentially similar, repetitive acts,⁵³ the ins and outs of what can be done between two people – or more than two people, or even (as our text emphasizes) members of different species.⁵⁴ This comment, then, may offer the reader a further interpretive angle on the unusually scholarly and classical conclusion to our text; that is, the essays implicitly constitute part of the programmatically encoded *variety* of this work, which foregrounds a concern that the reader might be bored by simple repetition of sexual encounters in contemporary London. Morris B. Kaplan comments on this introduction to Jack Saul's 'recollections':

Like a campy latter-day Scheherazade, Saul must entertain his patron (and *his* readers) with tales of erotic adventure and 'orgies of lust' so diverse and imaginative that their prurient interest will not 'pall.'⁵⁵

While Jack Saul's narrative includes an ever-expanding range of outlandish sexual practices, the final three sections of 'essays', departing from the text's main narrative model of the modern-day sexual adventures of prostitutes, contribute towards the work's programme of sexual variety.

Not only do the essays offer a new, 'scholarly' format for talking about sex,⁵⁶ but they include some extremely rare variations on normative practices, encompassing practices that are not included within the novel itself. So, for example, they make reference to supposedly 'historical' examples of hermaphroditism, as opposed to the novel's feigned case of hermaphroditism (we shall explore their

treatment of hermaphroditism in more detail below), and they offer anecdotes not of mere British gentlemen or aristocrats behaving badly (as in scenes within the novel),⁵⁷ but instead the more unrestrained antics of the Roman emperors, who were famous for sexual excess of many varieties and even (in the case of Caligula) went so far as to have sex with animals, at least according to the statement of the essays' author; this claim is not made elsewhere of Caligula, to the best of my knowledge.⁵⁸

The reputation of Rome for sexual licence, invention and excess obviously provides a major stimulus for the essays' interest in Rome rather than Greece, and the essay on sodomy's focus on the physical act of sodomy, rather than other aspects of male–male relations, provides a further explanation for the use of Rome, which provides more examples (particularly in the work of Martial, who is cited in the essays) than Greece of sexually and anatomically explicit writings on anal sex, despite some memorable passages referring to its mechanics and effects in authors such as Aristophanes.⁵⁹ More puzzling is the essay on tribadism's omission of Sappho, which is made even more noticeable by the plethora of references to Sappho in connection with female homosexuality elsewhere in Victorian pornography.⁶⁰ Sappho's absence from the essay on 'tribadism' may be thrown into further relief by its use of a titular word which is derived from Greek to refer to female homosexuality: cf. the comment of the *Index* on its terminology of 'tribade'⁶¹:

Tribades (from τριβω to rub), are women who have such a large clitoris that they can use it as a prick, either for poking or sodomising ... The clitoris of the tribade grows stiff, it enters a quim or an anus ... In fine the tribade does everything a male lover can do except spend ... The word tribas, however, is also used loosely of any lewdness between women in modern times, as masturbation with the fingers, a dildo, or the neck of a bottle, etc., *provided it is done by one woman to another*, but as far as our researches have gone, we have grave doubts about tribas being used thus loosely in ancient times.⁶²

However, our essay's focus solely on *Roman* tribadism when talking of antiquity ensures that the picture of female homosexuality that is given is sensational and voyeuristic, and thus matches the novel's pornographic tendencies, which we shall soon explore in more detail in the case of this essay's reference to Martial.

The sensational and voyeuristic side of the essays' engagement with the ancient world is, I would argue, an important factor in their focus solely on imperial Roman sources, as Martial, Juvenal and Suetonius alone are named, and there is an overwhelming interest in the sexual

exploits of the emperors that is clearly indebted to the last of these authors. The idea that the sexual conduct of the imperial age was particularly licentious was widespread.⁶³ Furthermore, the *imperial* aspect of Rome's decadence is heightened in the essays' citation only of authors from the imperial period in cataloguing ancient sexual practices, even where incidents and sources from Republican Rome would have been appropriate: so, for example, Catullus's poetry contains graphic references to anal sex,⁶⁴ but he does not feature in the essays. Again, the essays' survey of the sex lives of the emperors could easily have followed their acknowledged source, Suetonius, in treating Julius Caesar, notorious for his youthful liaison with King Nicomedes of Bithynia, as the first of the emperors, rather than beginning with Augustus.⁶⁵

The essays' use of imperial Roman sources must also be viewed in light of intense contemporary interest in the links between homosexuality, empire and urban culture, and in particular late Victorian anxieties about the increasing prevalence and visibility of homosexuality in the world city of London, a decadent urban milieu which offered countless, unbridled sexual opportunities; the novel itself plays on and contributes to such a vision of London.⁶⁶ Imperial Rome obviously provides an important parallel for such concerns, as it represents the original example of a pleasure-seeking, depraved and blasé metropolis. This can be exemplified in our text in the reference found in 'The Same Old Story', which sets the tone for the essays, to Nero's incest and Caligula's bestiality. Both of these are singular and shocking charges, although these vices are here claimed as 'fashionable',⁶⁷ misrepresenting the extent to which the emperors violated the social norms of their day.

That Rome matters as an *urban* as well as an imperial centre of corruption is also clear insofar as any references to other locations for ancient homosexual conduct are elided in the essays: witness in particular the essay on sodomy's references to Tiberius, Vitellius and the Spintriae.⁶⁸ This material is clearly indebted to Suetonius's *Lives*, and in particular *Tiberius* 42–3 and *Vitellius* 4, where the island of Capri is singled out as the location of perverted sexual excesses: Tiberius retreats there to enjoy his sexual kinks in privacy, and Vitellius acts as one of the young men who service him. Thus the Rome of the essays, even more than the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as referenced in the novel's title, provides an implicit model for the sexual licence and decadence explored throughout the novel,⁶⁹ with the difference that Rome is presented as more depraved than late Victorian London in that sodomy is there claimed to have been 'common' and 'habitual', rather than rare and confined to a particular subculture.

Concerns about London's own depravity, and developing subculture of young men who had sex with other men, had been most publicly aired in the recent (1870–1) scandal of Frederick Park and Ernest Boulton, or 'Fanny' and 'Stella', as they styled themselves. There had been extensive press coverage and public discussion of the scandal of these men who presented themselves as women, and were accused of 'conspiracy to commit the felony of sodomy'. It was feared that Boulton and Park constituted not an isolated case of respectable young men detected in crime, but members of a circle of like-minded perverts.⁷⁰ While newspaper editorials professed disgust at the sensational case, they also brought to wider public attention the association between cross-dressing, gender nonconformity and same-sex desires that was being made in medical literature of the period. The case provides excellent material for Saul's narrative, as Saul is befriended by the notorious pair, and becomes an eyewitness to some of the events aired in court, including a drag ball, to obviously titillating effect. One element of the novel's engagement with the Boulton-Park case which has no referent in the scandal itself, however, is the curious episode in which Boulton, posing as a lady named 'Laura', has sex with a Miss Bruce; 'Laura' claims that she is a 'hermaphrodite', and therefore cannot get Miss Bruce pregnant, and so persuades the latter to take part in a putatively 'lesbian' sexual encounter, which 'Laura' relates thus:

I love to look like a girl, and to be thought one. I had such a lark the other day with a beautiful milliner at Richmond ... I ... fancied a new dress; or, rather, I had seen this lovely milliner in her shop ... The cordial had so warmed her blood she could hardly tell what she wanted; besides, I was a lady, and not a man, so there could be no harm in that, as she afterwards told me ... I pretended to resist her attempts to get at my cunney, and at last blushing told her that I was one of those unfortunate beings (which perhaps she had heard of) who had a malformation, something like the male instrument – in fact, it was capable of stiffening, and always did so under excitement, exactly as a man's would do.

'But, darling', I added, 'it is quite harmless, and can do no mischief like the real male affair. Now you, I know, will be too disgusted to want to kiss me, although I am dying for you to afford me that pleasure.'

This avowal seemed to excite her still more, and she assured me that she had often heard of hermaphrodites, and that they could have women as well as a man.⁷¹

Boulton and Park were accused of many affronts to the social norms of

their day, but not of having sex with women while posing themselves first as women and then as hermaphrodites. However, one of the imperial Roman texts which is cited in the essay on tribadism surely inspired this scene's outré sexual scenario: the essay cites Martial to argue that the point of 'some' of Martial's epigrams is that some tribades were hermaphrodites and penetrated boys with their enlarged clitorises. This alludes to Martial 7.67.1–3:

Pedicat pueros tribas Philaenis
et tentigine saeuior mariti
undenas dolat in die puellas.

These lines were rendered in prose in the *Index* as 'Philaenis, the tribade, sodomises boys, and more fiercely passionate than a lewd husband, gamahuches eleven girls a day',⁷² and they have sometimes been understood to allude to Philaenis having an enlarged clitoris which she uses in the manner of a penis.⁷³ The essay may also allude to Martial's comment on Bassa's sexual involvement with other women at 1.90.7–8 ('inter se geminos audes committere cunnos/mentiturque uirum prodigiosa Venus'; for which the *Index*'s prose translation is 'you dare to unite two quims, and your unnatural lust would fain imitate the act of a man'),⁷⁴ which could allude to Bassa penetrating women;⁷⁵ alternatively, both passages have also been interpreted as alluding to these women using a dildo to penetrate their partners.⁷⁶ The novel's encounter between Laura and Miss Bruce, in which a 'hermaphrodite' (or at least someone who can be understood to have irregular genitals), who also has sex with members of their own gender, penetrates a member of the opposite gender, closely parallels Philaenis's penetration of boys at Martial 7.67, albeit with the genders reversed; both Martial and the novel describe extremely 'queer' sexual encounters between males and females. Martial thus acts as a witness to back up the 'reality' of the kinky scenario described in the novel, as well as perhaps providing the inspiration for a scene that draws on a real-life sodomitical scandal, yet adds an extra layer of gender and sexual perversity.

While Rome thus provides precedents, and even a model, for some of the more outlandish sexual configurations within the novel itself, the essay on sodomy focuses on a single aspect of Rome's sexual practices and ideology, as its title suggests, and it restricts its discussion of ancient sexuality even further by only considering anal sex between men. This is in striking contrast with the essay on 'tribadism', which clearly uses tribadism in a broad sense to denote 'lesbianism', referring more than once to lesbian 'gamahuching' or oral sex, rather than the specific act of sexual 'rubbing' between women that tribadism in its strictest etymological meaning denotes, and to

which the essay's 'frigging' alludes.⁷⁷ The limited approach of the essay on sodomy is also at odds with the novel itself, which depicts sexual encounters involving a vast array of possibilities for sexual interaction between men.

In particular, oral sex between men is a common feature of the novel,⁷⁸ but there is no mention of this practice in the essay on sodomy, despite a clear hint at it in Suetonius's account of the actions of Nero.⁷⁹ This hint is either misunderstood or suppressed in our essay with the vague description 'having the young Aulus Plautius by force'. The focus of the essay of course mirrors the way in which anal sex formed the major legal focus in contemporary prosecutions of homosexual acts,⁸⁰ but the discrepancy nevertheless looks odd given the interest in fellatio in the novel itself. Perhaps, however, the essay's concentration on sodomy should be viewed as a way of sidestepping the negative comments about the practice of oral sex that are found in ancient sources, based on the idea of the *impurum os*, the mouth defiled by such contact, an idea which clearly lies behind Nero's words on executing Aulus Plautius in Suetonius.⁸¹ An illuminating comparison can be found in a (very rare) use of Latinate terminology in a description of a man performing oral sex on another man in a scene from *My Secret Life*:

We sucked each other's pricks. – He was pleased with the performance ... He did not irruminate me with skill, and after a little time we ceased and his prick drooped.⁸²

Commenting on the *recherché* vocabulary of 'irruminate', a *hapax legomenon*, Walter Kendrick suggests that the author relies on 'memories of Catullus', and, while misforming the Latin verb, nevertheless gets the sense right, insofar as his negative attitude towards homosexual encounters makes it 'likely that the scornful, demeaning connotations of *irrumare* were on his mind'.⁸³ By avoiding references to *irrumatio*, then, the essay manages to sidestep some of the most negative comments that are found about encounters between men in Latin literature, and its tendentious picture of Rome as a society in which same-sex encounters flourish without disapproval is not disrupted.

Indeed, almost the only hint in this essay of any Roman distaste for same-sex encounters is found in the claim that:

In Rome it [sodomy] was the habit, the recognized habit, and it only became hateful when the man always received the attention and never gave. In those days men loved a lusty fellow as much as women do now, and the lusty fellow could give as much pleasure to a man as he could to a woman, and be thought none

This is a novel take on the sexual ideology of Rome: it is correct in identifying both societal condemnation of so-called passive homosexuality and a lack of concern for the phenomenon of men having sex with other males per se, yet is nevertheless wholly misleading. For it completely elides the Roman obsession that men must always be the ones to penetrate,⁸⁵ misrepresenting Roman sexual *mores* by implying that the same man would typically be expected to play both the ‘active’ and ‘passive’ sexual roles, to ‘give’ as well as ‘receive’ the attention on occasion, to use the vocabulary of the essay itself. While this sexual versatility fits well with the reciprocity involved in many of the sexual encounters within Saul’s recollections,⁸⁶ it distorts Roman cultural norms. It is possible that we have here a simple case of a misunderstanding of the ancient evidence, but it seems more likely that this constitutes a creative misreading, which serves to align the sexual codes of Rome with those of the novel itself, perpetuating the idea that Rome was a pornotopia in which value-free sex was enjoyed in as many permutations as possible. It is, of course, hard to judge between these two possibilities when the identity of the author of the essay – and thus the extent of his classical knowledge – is uncertain.⁸⁷ Nor do we know whether the author of the essays would have expected his readers to be alert to his misreading of the Roman evidence, although this would have been made more difficult by the fact that the essay quotes no Latin in its discussion of Roman sexual *mores*, nor gives any *specific* references to its sources (such as the exact poems of Martial or chapters of Suetonius it alludes to), unlike other texts of this period which adduce classical evidence when talking about sex between men, such as Burton’s ‘Terminal Essay’ on pederasty and the notes to the *Don Leon*.

What, then, are we to make of the use of classics in our text? In terms of the wider concerns of this volume, we are *in extremis* in a number of ways here. First, the ancient material that forms the basis of the essays’ response is itself extreme: Martial and Suetonius, for example, are clearly outraged at (if intrigued by) the perverse and highly non-normative sexual conduct that their texts record. We are clearly at the edges of ancient sexuality and its reception here. Yet the essays depict what are extreme and unusual examples of sexual behaviour by ancient standards as the norm for ancient Rome; the extreme is rendered if not mainstream then still far more normal by being treated as representative of Roman culture. It would be easy simply to dismiss the essays’ treatment of Rome as far from profound or serious, and as dictated by the text’s programmatic pornographic focus on sex, and this is certainly an important factor in its reception

of Rome.

However, the text's engagement with classics, and what the novel reveals about Victorian responses to antiquity, is more suggestive. The essays offer a startlingly different vision of modernity's relationship with classical antiquity from that found in parallel texts, most obviously in their focus on Rome, and the way in which they completely ignore Greece. Other texts of the period treating homosexuality in antiquity valorize male-male 'Greek love' as a pure, sexless devotion, and a model for modern men with leanings towards their own sex, and either ignore Rome or use it as a debased foil. On most accounts, Rome exemplifies the corruption of idealized Hellas by imperial excess, unrestrained perversion and brutal lust.⁸⁸ By focusing on Rome, and not Greece, and on sex and sexual practices, rather than idealized spiritual bonds, the essays provide a strong counterpoint to the version of ancient homosexuality found in early homosexual activists, who often give the impression that Greek homosexuality did not involve any actual sex. The essays' contrast to such desexed appropriations of Greece is thrown into even stronger relief by the way in which they present Rome in an even more sexualized light than their historical sources: so Suetonius's lives of the emperors are shorn of the positive achievements that precede the record of their sexual irregularities in the Roman author's more balanced accounts,⁸⁹ and the essays on sodomy suggest that the emperors were guilty of even more outlandish behaviour than that which Suetonius attributes to them, such as bestiality. The essays thus provide a 'sexed up' approach to antiquity, in highly marked contrast to other contemporary classical receptions, which almost always seek to play down the sexual elements of 'extreme' classical material such as Martial or Suetonius: the usual story of the Victorian engagement with ancient sexuality is one of expurgation and repression.⁹⁰ Looking to the margins, then, for classical reception, enables us to gain a more nuanced understanding of classical engagements in the Victorian period; the freedom that a private, pornographic text offers for engaging with ancient sexuality results in a very different version of the classics from the standard Victorian model. Yet the fact that this marginal vision of ancient Rome sold well to the same audience of privileged upper- and middle-class men who formed the majority of those who were classically educated, and who therefore produced more mainstream classical receptions, in this period suggests that we should be alert to any signs of prurient engagement with the classics in less marginal responses to the classics; the margins offer us an important methodological advance for approaching Victorian receptions of ancient sexuality. These essays provide an important reminder that the classics, and Rome in particular, offer the

opportunity to readers of the Victorian age to engage with sex and sexuality, in a contemporary culture in which frank discussion of these topics is generally forbidden.

The vision of the essays appears radical, and not merely pornographic, moreover, because of the various links implicitly made between the worlds of the novel and the essays, Victorian London and imperial Rome; what we have here is not simply a portrait of ancient Rome as the venue for the biggest orgy in history (as it were). Rather, through links between Rome and London, which have been discussed in some detail, and the reference to homosexual relations in Rome with the contemporary legal vocabulary of 'sodomy', our text suggests that homosexuality is itself a transhistorical phenomenon, even if it has occasioned some very different responses in other societies. It is implied, if never stated directly, that modern London might follow the example of Rome in treating it as an 'amusement' rather than a crime, not least because the essays suggest that it is *not* a widespread contemporary phenomenon. The radical nature of the essays can also be seen in the way in which they treat female homosexuality as a phenomenon related to male homosexuality,⁹¹ where other early homosexual activists had often ignored lesbianism or sought to distinguish it from idealized male homosexuality.⁹²

Our essays are also groundbreaking in that they actually engage with Roman sexual *ideology*. So, for example, they recognize that there was a stigma attached to the 'passive' or 'receptive' role in anal intercourse, albeit not without misunderstanding or misrepresentation, and they are aware that Galba's interest in *exoleti* or other adult males, rather than boys, needs an 'excuse' for his contemporaries. In engaging with Roman ideology, they sharply contrast with the approach of contemporary works on ancient homosexuality: John Addington Symonds and other early homosexual activists could not see past the licentiousness they detected in Rome to examine the particularities of Roman sex and the codes that attached to it. For such men, Roman sex was a free for all, sensual and perverted, rather than being codified and theorized, as was Greek love (albeit to a greater extent).⁹³ Conversely, our text's interest in the nitty-gritty of sexual acts and ideology probably arises naturally from its pornographic affiliations, insofar as pornography is obviously interested in sexual acts and roles. In conclusion, then, our text constitutes an important part of both the history of sexuality and the history of classical reception. We might be in low company, but it has a lot to offer us.⁹⁴

CHAPTER 8

THE CARIBBEAN SOCRATES PEDRO

HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA AND THE MEXICAN *ATENEO DE LA JUVENTUD*

Rosa Andújar

One of the most important Latin American intellectuals of the twentieth century, Pedro Henríquez Ureña (born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on 29 June 1884; died in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 11 May 1946) is typically known for his efforts in promoting a pan-Hispanic American cultural and literary identity.¹ Less known, however, is his role in re-introducing ancient Greek literature and thought across a region in which the Graeco-Roman classics were generally part of a forgotten colonial past.² The Dominican intellectual was a leading figure not only in the most prominent intellectual circles in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Mexico,³ but also in Argentina, where he spent last twenty years of his life teaching philology and literature at the university in La Plata, sharing a deep friendship with the young Jorge Luis Borges.⁴ Though he repeatedly invoked Hellenic thought and literature in all these contexts for various ideological and political ends,⁵ this chapter examines both his earliest and most intimate encounter with the ancient Greek world: the philhellenic cultural programme that Henríquez Ureña spearheaded in the *Ateneo de la Juventud* (Youth Athenaeum) in Mexico City in 1907–10, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution. I specifically focus on three activities, each extraordinary and ‘extreme’ in its own right: first, his undisputed role as the ‘Socrates’ of the *Ateneo*, presiding over lectures and discussions about the ancient Greek world; his engagement with Walter Pater and the English Victorian intellectual’s notions of Hellenism, which led to the first (and still only) translation of Pater’s *Greek Studies* in Spanish; and finally, his authorship of *El Nacimiento de Dionisos* (The Birth of Dionysus), perhaps the only example of a modern drama written in the imagined ancient style of Phrynichus the Athenian tragedian,

whose work only survives in meagre fragments. I emphasize the manner in which *Henríquez Ureña's* Greek readings had a profound influence on members of the *Ateneo*, all of whom were active figures in the Mexican Revolution but additionally emerged as political, cultural and educational leaders in the new post-revolutionary nation. *Ateneístas* (men of the *Ateneo*) such as José Vasconcelos and Alfonso Reyes considered the grounding in the Greeks that *Henríquez Ureña* had provided an essential preparation for their fight against the intellectual complacency that pervaded Mexican life under the three-decade regime of Porfirio Díaz.

Operating at the margins of the Western world and in a region in which the Graeco-Roman classics were not part of an established educational tradition, *Henríquez Ureña* qualifies as an 'extreme' reader and promoter of the Graeco-Roman classics. As I contend, the Dominican intellectual not only facilitated a 're-discovery' of the ancient Greeks at a critical juncture in Mexican history, but also encouraged fellow artists and writers to experiment with this material in order to produce and inspire a new literature for Latin America. The *Ateneístas'* brief engagement with ancient Greek ideas and literature ultimately led them to deploy their knowledge of these 'new' ancient texts and ideas in contemporary ideological conflicts about the future of both Mexico and Latin America. In this manner, *Henríquez Ureña's* introduction of ancient Greek and other European humanistic ideas in Mexico helped spark a revolution, radically altering the cultural, educational and political life of a country which had been for several decades deeply entrenched in positivist thought. This 're-discovery' of the Greeks in Mexico, and especially *Henríquez Ureña's* insistence on their inclusion in what Nicola Miller calls the 'social imaginary' of Latin American modernity,⁶ allow us to see the cultural potency that ancient Greek and Roman literature and culture can nonetheless wield in 'marginal' contexts, in which the Graeco-Roman classics have had a fragmentary afterlife as texts that did not form part of the general educational or cultural tradition. Despite Mexico's physical distance from Western Europe, however, the *Ateneístas'* 'extreme' fixation with the ancient Greeks tells a familiar story: elite and educated men who employed their knowledge of antiquity to bolster their own standing. The swift manner in which these educated men at the 'periphery' assumed ownership of European ancient texts raises questions regarding their presumed marginality. This case study reminds us that today's scholars should exercise some caution in automatically assigning the label 'extreme' or 'marginal' to readers or audiences in a non-European context.

Socrates in Mexico

In early 1908, a group of young men in Mexico City decided to turn their collective attention to the study of ancient Greece. They proposed to spend the rest of that year and the bulk of many others reading the literature and philosophy of the classical Athenians in translation, meeting on a weekly basis, with each member taking turns to study a particular aspect of ancient Greece and subsequently presenting his findings to the group.⁷ They also planned readings of Greek texts and Hellenic-themed parties. Because of this sudden and intense engagement with the ancient Greeks, the group, which had been called *la Sociedad de Conferencias* (the Lecture Society) upon its founding in 1906, renamed itself *el Ateneo de la Juventud*, and later, *el Ateneo de México* (the Mexican Athenaeum). This was also no ordinary group of young intellectuals: virtually all the members, a list which included Alfonso Reyes, José Vasconcelos and Pedro Henríquez Ureña, later took up crucial roles not only in Mexican political life after the Revolution but also in the most significant Latin American intellectual and literary circles of the twentieth century.⁸ Later, these men would describe their time as *Ateneístas* as their ‘halcyon days’.⁹ Their leader and teacher, hailed as ‘Socrates’, was Pedro Henríquez Ureña, an intellectual from the Dominican Republic who had recently arrived in Mexico. In this section, I discuss the general Greek reading programme that he instituted, which would go on to have a major impact in Mexican educational and cultural life. I also examine the Hellenic mythology that the group cultivated for its own self-definition, paying particular attention to the manner in which the Dominican intellectual’s leadership and guidance of this elite male scholarly circle was carefully cast in Greek terms.

Various accounts relate that the group, which had been initiated by Alfonso Caso as *la Sociedad de Conferencias*, became the *Ateneo* only after the arrival of Pedro Henríquez Ureña.¹⁰ The young Dominican had arrived directly from Cuba after a stay in the United States, where he had been immersed in the cultural and artistic life of New York City, living in a guest house near Columbia University.¹¹ It appears that Henríquez Ureña persuaded the group to take up the Greeks as they were currently in vogue in New York City: ‘Greece is this year’s fashion in the “commercial metropolis”’.¹² Despite being aware of its popularity, Henríquez Ureña admits to a general ignorance of ancient literature, which he claims rarely to have ‘savoured’.¹³ When his father, Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal, travels to the 1907 Hague Convention as the official delegate from the Dominican Republic,¹⁴ Henríquez Ureña asks him to purchase numerous primary and secondary texts on ancient Greece, and to send them to him in Mexico:

The poems of Homer and Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles,

Euripides, the bucolic poets, in the translations of Leconte de Lisle; Plato, in French; *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece* by Otfried Müller, the *Studies* of Walter Pater (in English), Gomperz's *Greek Thinkers*, Alfred Weber's *History of European Philosophy*, and some others.¹⁵

Thanks to these and other books Henríquez Ureña and his colleagues procured from the United States and Europe, the *Ateneístas* hoped to institute a wide reading programme based on the Greeks, which similarly emphasized mastery of ancient Greek poetry and aspects of Plato:

We finally organised a program of forty reading sessions which comprise twelve books of [Homeric] epic, six tragedies, two comedies, nine [Platonic] dialogues, Hesiod, hymns, odes, idylls and elegies, and many more things along with their corresponding commentaries (Müller, Murray, Ouvré, Pater, Bréal, Ruskin, etc.), and we are carrying them out in order.¹⁶

Several accounts state that they gathered to read and discuss these texts so as to gain direct access to a literature that was until then fragmentary and otherwise inaccessible to them, previously only available through quotation in manuals or via invocations by modern authors (typically French).¹⁷ In other words, unlike most post-Renaissance forms of Western European Hellenism, the *Ateneístas'* pursuit of Greece was not led by a nostalgic desire to recapture an ideal which was now lost.¹⁸ Similarly, they do not seem to be aware of the modern association between the Greeks and what Daniel Orrells calls 'a civilized, civilizing, white masculinity'.¹⁹ Their concern appears to have been to come to general terms with a literature that continued to hold sway over the modern imagination in Europe and North America, without any regard to engage deeply with its historical context or material culture, or with any of the ideologies surrounding its implementation and impact in the modern world. The main aim in acquainting themselves with the Greeks appears to have been the acquisition of a global cultural capital.

Their reading programme had an immediate impact on Mexican cultural life. The famous monthly *Revista Moderna*, which was the primary means through which Hispanic modernism was disseminated across the country,²⁰ included Greek topics for the first time, such as a story by Jules Lemaitre about the Trojan War and writings by Nietzsche, and most notably, published translations of the Greek essays of Walter Pater by Pedro Henríquez Ureña.²¹ The *Ateneístas* also began to publish and circulate various essays reflecting on both ancient Greek literature and its potent impact on European cultural

life.²² Typical of the latter is Henríquez Ureña's 1908 essay, *La moda griega* (The Greek Fashion), which stresses the continuing importance of a classical Hellenism for modern literary tastes:

It does not matter how much we pretend to be interested in the Balkan Question, what seduces the literary public, the fashion that still has not been exhausted, is ancient Greece ... In well-read circles, the *Odyssey* is commented upon with a fruition that no other modern novel enjoys and the Homeric epithets are frequently the stars of the conversation: even the editorials of North American newspapers include evocations of these *winged words*. And that's not all. In a few months, Sophocles will be as fashionable a writer as Oscar Wilde, thanks to the music of Richard Strauss. Aristophanes inspires German comic writers. Plato is already in the tongues of the new thinkers.²³

Ultimately, behind these lengthy lists of contemporary European and North American authors who have dabbled in the Greeks is a general provocation to Latin American writers and artists to engage with these influential texts, perhaps in an effort to produce a new Latin American literature which would travel beyond the region to reach a more global audience. Several *Ateneístas* interpreted this aspirational element of the Greeks quite literally,²⁴ as among their early oeuvres are works that directly mimicked or evoked Greek texts: in 1908, Alfonso Reyes wrote a new satyr play entitled *Coro de sátiros en el bosque* (Chorus of Satyrs in the Forest) as a set piece which accompanied Pedro Henríquez Ureña's new tragedy *The Birth of Dionysus*, which I discuss below.²⁵ In 1923 he published *Ifigenia Cruel* (Cruel Iphigenia), a radical adaptation of Euripides's *Iphigenia at Tauris* in which the heroine chooses not to leave Tauris.²⁶ In 1916 José Vasconcelos wrote a modern philosophical tragedy entitled *Prometeo Vencedor* (Prometheus Triumphant), which engages with Iamblichus's *Life of Pythagoras* as well as Schopenhauer and Wagner. More crucially, Vasconcelos would later name his famous 1935 autobiography *Ulises Criollo* (Creole Ulysses).²⁷

Despite the fact that they only devoted one year to the in-depth study of the Greeks, the group thereafter cast and continually defined itself in Hellenic terms. Henríquez Ureña became the undisputed Socratic figure.²⁸ Alfonso Reyes elaborates on the apt identification of Henríquez Ureña with the Athenian thinker, in a discussion of the Dominican intellectual's pedagogy:

Deep down, the Socratic influence of Henríquez Ureña was more deep and more all-encompassing. Without knowing it, he taught [us] to see, to hear, to think, and he provoked a true reform in

our culture, thinking in his small world with a thousand commitments of laboriousness and conscience.²⁹

Alfonso Reyes was in turn praised by Henríquez Ureña as the Mexican Plato in a 1907 essay *Genus Platonis*, an essay whose title is inspired by Walter Pater's 'The Genius of Plato'.³⁰ The 1911 publication of Reyes's *Cuestiones Estéticas* (Aesthetic Matters) in Paris contained a prologue by the Peruvian writer Francisco García Calderón, which likewise continued to reflect these Hellenic terms. Not only does he repeatedly address Alfonso Reyes (who was only twenty-two at the time) as the Mexican ephebe ('efebo mexicano') but he also comments on the general Greek spirit of the *Ateneo* as a collective:

Over their adventures presides the Greek ideal, an imperishable suggestion. They know the artistic and philosophic Greece, and something of the Platonic spirit arrives in the colonial city where an ardent group listens to the music of ideal spheres and discharges a harmonious education.³¹

Despite the connection with Plato and the evocations of the Greek symposium, the *Ateneo* was not concerned with engaging with modern male homosexuality, as Linda Dowling has argued to be the case in the Oxford classics of Walter Pater and Benjamin Jowett.³² Rather, the group developed and encouraged a mythology based around its own perceived inherent 'Greekness'. This generalized Greek ideal, to which the group aspired and felt itself to embody, began to permeate their own conceptions of what the modern Latin American intellectual should be: in a 1916 lecture 'El movimiento intelectual contemporáneo de México' (Mexico's contemporary intellectual movement) delivered in Peru, José Vasconcelos redefines the intellectual man in terms of Ulises.³³ Though the Greeks were part of an arguably alien European past, their invocation in early-twentieth-century Latin America nevertheless conveyed both cultural weight and legitimacy by the simple fact that they had historically wielded such power in the global North.

The *Ateneo*'s engagement with the Greeks went beyond critiquing the culture of their times; their Hellenism was a crucial harbinger of progressive educational policy. Their encounter with ancient Greek and European humanistic thinking encouraged the *Ateneístas* to question the edifices of contemporary Mexican society, which had become entrenched during the long regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911). Since the country's independence in 1821, the predominance of Auguste Comte's positivism in Mexico had generally banished the study of the humanities and philosophy in favour of scientific and technological subjects that would enable the country to progress

swiftly in an industrialized world.³⁴ This myopic emphasis on the ‘scientific’ not only made Mexico resistant to modernism, which began in other Latin American countries as early as the mid-nineteenth century, but also likely contributed to the long duration of Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship.³⁵ The prestigious Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (National Preparatory High School) mostly taught scientific subjects, to the detriment of humanistic and literary studies, so independent reading groups and lecture societies such as the *Ateneo* were essential for anyone seeking a more profound engagement with the humanities.³⁶ Various accounts about the *Ateneo* stress how the *Ateneístas*’ contributions to Mexican intellectual and political life spurred on both the Mexican Revolution of 1915 and the modernization of the country for the first time since its independence from Spain.³⁷ Most notably, they became involved in the reformation of the Mexican National University as well as in wider educational debates advocating ‘free thinking’ for all social classes as a means to achieve progress in the twentieth century.³⁸ Of course, this was a rather limited progressivism, largely driven by a group of educated and well-connected young men: at no point did they discuss the inclusion of women or other oppressed social or ethnic groups.

In this manner, attention to the ancient Greeks for the *Ateneístas* was therefore not a romantic nor a nostalgic act: it was not a search for an aesthetically superior culture that would allow them either to escape their current time or to uncover a lost part of their heritage. Rather, they believed that through an engagement with the forgotten Greeks they could reform society, and in particular break the stranglehold that positivism and other forms of utilitarian thinking wielded over their country.³⁹ Through a commitment to Hellenic classicism, a long-established manner of critiquing modernity in Europe, they saw an opportunity not only for achieving individual intellectual stimulation, but also for potentially liberating a whole generation of ‘latino-americanos’. The *Ateneo*’s Hellenism was thus always progressive, never anchored in the distant and forgotten past, but always with a view of reforming the future.

Walter Pater, a ‘critic-artist’ for Latin America

In a December 1907 letter to his brother Max in Santo Domingo, Pedro Henríquez Ureña discusses the novelty that is ‘Greece’ to Latin America:

The pessimistic Greece of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the most serene [Greece] of Walter Pater, the ironic and most accomplished [Greece] of Oscar Wilde, besides the requirement to

read the texts themselves, are very new points of view in [Latin] America.⁴⁰

This brief explanation, which also draws attention to competing notions of Hellenism, not only justifies the reading programme which Henríquez Ureña would help establish in 1908, but it additionally illustrates his engagement with contemporary European thinkers, whose works were generally difficult to access. Besides reading ancient Greek texts from Homer to Plato, then, the men of the *Ateneo* were additionally engaging with European criticism about the meaning and importance of Hellenism in modernity, much of which had not yet reached Latin America.⁴¹ For Henríquez Ureña, these modern writings were furthermore crucial towards developing his own personal commitment to the Hellenic ideal; in his memoirs he cites Plato and Walter Pater as the two individuals responsible for his ‘conversion’ to Hellenism.⁴² As this section will illustrate, Pater’s notions of Hellas informed the *Ateneístas*’ experience of the ancient Greeks and significantly deepened their engagement with the Greek ideal. I focus in particular on the influence that Walter Pater had on Pedro Henríquez Ureña, who produced as a matter of priority the first translation of the British intellectual’s work in Spanish during his tenure as the *Ateneo*’s ‘Socrates’.⁴³ His efforts to introduce recent foreign scholarship about Hellenism and the larger weight of the classical tradition to this ‘marginal’ context, in which such matters were not demonstrably relevant, are striking, complicating contemporary notions of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’.

Hellenism and a reassessment of ancient Greek texts were central to Walter Pater’s aesthetic philosophy, as evidenced by the central place given to discussions of Greek material in his works, from his 1873 *The Renaissance* and his various essays on Greek myth (published throughout the 1870s and 1880s and later compiled in *Greek Studies*) and his book on *Plato and Platonism* (1893).⁴⁴ Prior to his arrival in Mexico, Henríquez Ureña seems to have been aware of Pater’s significance as an aesthetic critic: his 1904 essay ‘Tres Escritores Ingleses’ (Three English Writers), which introduces the work of Oscar Wilde, Arthur Wing Pinero and Bernard Shaw to a Spanish-speaking audience, cites Pater as one of the figures responsible for creating a revolutionary movement in England.⁴⁵ In another essay, he additionally identifies him as one of the most important British Hellenists.⁴⁶ Despite this general awareness of Pater’s worth in English literary circles, it appears that the acquisition of Pater’s *Greek Studies* after his father’s trip to the 1907 Hague convention was Henríquez Ureña’s first opportunity to read Pater’s work.⁴⁷ He deemed Pater’s essays worthy of immediate translation: between October 1908 and

December 1909, his translations of all the essays in *Greek Studies* were serialized in the *Revista Moderna*, included as part of a general series of essays on forty ancient and modern authors.⁴⁸ They subsequently appeared as a single book in 1910.⁴⁹ Given the *Revista's* importance as vehicle for the transmission of new ideas and its circulation in and beyond Mexico,⁵⁰ the decision to publish Pater's essays in this manner may have well served to emphasize their perceived importance and relevance to a contemporary Latin American audience.

Though Henríquez Ureña does not elaborate fully on why Pater merited inclusion in the *Revista Moderna's* list of forty ancient and modern authors, a small clue may be found in his translation of Pater's first essay on Dionysus ('Dionisos: Forma Espiritual del Fuego y del Rocío'). In this essay, the Dominican intellectual includes a preliminary and brief note that emphasizes Pater's importance as a modern commentator on the Greek spirit:

The work, whose translation the *Revista Moderna* offers today to its readers, is one of the most significant among those in contemporary literature which have devoted themselves to explain the Greek spirit. Walter Pater ... is not only the most surprising contemporary stylist in the English language, but also one of the most profound and wise modern critic-artists.⁵¹

Here, Henríquez Ureña presents Pater as a 'crítico-artista', a new breed of artistic and creative intellectual whose expertise was nevertheless both deep and wise. Evidence of Pater's creativity and scholarly depth can be seen, for example, in his essay on Hippolytus, which quickly moves from an initial learned overview to a more imaginative retelling of the myth.⁵² As the essay progresses, Pater increasingly inserts dramatic dialogue,⁵³ as well as passionate rhetorical questions and interjections.⁵⁴ In short, the essay quickly becomes a sort of a tragic retelling in prose. It is perhaps this same creativity which may have inspired Henríquez Ureña to write his own tragedy, also in prose, as we shall see in the next section. At a time when Latin American intellectuals were moving beyond the serious '*maestro*' label that figures such as José Martí and Rubén Darío were readily given in the late nineteenth century, to the '*intelectual comprometido*' of the 1920s who was politically and socially committed to the advancement of his country, Henríquez Ureña became captivated with another possibility embodied in Walter Pater: a creative and artistic intellectual who could communicate his erudition more widely through more inventive means.

Henríquez Ureña's engagement with Pater went beyond translation. Pater and his thoughts on Greece figure throughout the Dominican's early work. As I mentioned above, his essay praising Alfonso Reyes,

‘*Genus Platonis*’ is modelled on Pater’s chapter ‘The Genius of Plato’ in *Plato and Platonism*.⁵⁵ In fact, Pater’s *Plato and Platonism* appears to have guided the *Ateneístas*’ experience of reading Plato. In *Ulises Criollo* José Vasconcelos recalls how this book served as essential commentary for the *Ateneístas* as they attempted to understand Plato.⁵⁶ The attraction to Pater’s work on Plato as an instructional book may be seen as curious, especially given its immediate and current reception in Anglophone circles. Richard Jenkyns writes that ‘one of the invigorating characteristics of the Victorians is their ability to write spectacularly bad books’.⁵⁷ Though he cites the ‘mannered and muted style’ of the book as evidence of some meticulousness on the part of Pater, Jenkyns ultimately dismisses the book, given that ‘about Plato it tells us next to nothing’.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the book probably appealed to the young men in Mexico by its unique focus on its intended youthful audience; Pater, according to Daniel Orrells, represents Plato and his philosophy ‘as suspended within a youthful mode, both technical and philosophical, and an everyday concern troubling any young man’.⁵⁹ In his dismissal of Pater, Jenkyns likewise identifies a naïve and youthful aspect to Pater, whom he believes was in fact attracted to Plato as ‘an artist and personality’ rather than as a philosophical figure.⁶⁰ It is not difficult to see how to a young man Walter Pater offered another attractive path of scholarly engagement, one more focused on artistic vision.

Among scholars of the classical Greek tradition Pater is widely known for casting a shadow over the Romantic tradition of Hellenism which, from Johann Winckelmann to Matthew Arnold, typically associated Greece with beauty and nobility.⁶¹ Denis Donoghue situates Pater (along with Friedrich Nietzsche, James G. Frazer and Gilbert Murray) well within the revisionist group that interpreted Greece ‘as the site of turbulence, ferocity, and sorrow, not merely of wisdom’,⁶² and furthermore identifies him as *the* English writer ‘who most eloquently expressed the revisionist view of Greece’.⁶³ Strangely, in Pedro Henríquez Ureña’s writings and reflections about Pater, this conception of a scholar who exposed the strange and grotesque elements of Hellas is not at all evident. Instead, the Dominican intellectual paints a romantic portrait of Pater throughout his early work:

Thus we must prefer to Matthew Arnold’s theorising whim and his innumerable family, Walter Pater’s genuine critical temperance, true daughter of the classical spirit, whose purifying mirror only captures perfect images, which are already clean from inopportune shadows.⁶⁴

Here, Henríquez Ureña praises Pater’s seemingly flawless acumen in

no uncertain terms, producing commentary that is more akin to hagiography than scholarship. Elsewhere Henríquez Ureña cites Pater as the ‘last Renaissance man’.⁶⁵ This obvious admiration and adoration for Pater earned Henríquez Ureña enemies in Mexico, such as José Juan Tablada, who condemns him precisely for bringing the cult of Pater to Mexico:

Later would arrive those migratory interlopers of literature who would engrave diamonds on a tie whose end was dipped in Menéndez y Pelayo’s inkwell, who preached the strict imitation of Walter Pater, while forgetting his intimate aberrations.⁶⁶

Despite the racially charged element in the condemnation, the statement nevertheless communicates Henríquez Ureña’s obsession with Pater, which demanded a strict imitation of the Victorian thinker while conveniently forgetting his homosexuality. I have elsewhere discussed how Pater influenced Henríquez Ureña’s notions of a utopic Latin American future grounded in Hellenism,⁶⁷ but what is fascinating here is the manner in which Henríquez Ureña’s continual presentation of an idealized and romanticized Pater is ultimately based on a superficial understanding of his works and convenient disregard of the English intellectual’s life: a vision of Pater as the ‘perfect’ intellectual, steering clear from the controversial aspects of both his work and personality.

Restoring absence: Phrynicus Tragicus and *El Nacimiento de Dionisos*

In translating Pater into Spanish, Pedro Henríquez Ureña not only makes recent public scholarship about the ancient Greek world accessible for the first time to a Latin American audience, but also presents the English thinker’s work as an example of the creative scholarship that can be produced by modern intellectuals. This notion of a thinker who is able to combine the academic and creative was an important model for Henríquez Ureña, whose engagements with the Greek world went beyond the scholarly realm and into the imaginative. As we shall see in this section, during his tenure as the ‘Socrates’ of the Mexican *Ateneo*, he also wrote a new ancient Greek play, *El Nacimiento de Dionisos* (The Birth of Dionysus). As I briefly discussed above, the creation of this play can be partly seen as a general challenge for Latin American writers to engage with classical Greek literature in the same manner as their European contemporaries. The play, however, is one of the earliest engagements with ancient Greek theatre in Latin America,⁶⁸ along with Alfonso

Reyes's *El Coro de Sátiros* (The Chorus of Satyrs), two plays which were furthermore composed for a special Hellenic-themed Christmas party that celebrated the *Ateneo*'s year of studying the Greeks.⁶⁹ Crucially, *El Nacimiento de Dionisos* had a wider reach beyond Mexico: not only was it published in the January 1909 issue of *Revista Moderna* but it also appeared as a standalone monograph in New York in 1916. Moreover, unlike all future engagements with Greek tragedy across the region, such as Virgilio Piñera's *Electra Garrigó* or Griselda Gambaro's *Antígona Furiosa*,⁷⁰ this work was not an adaptation of a surviving tragic play, but rather an original creation that staged a new plot that is not otherwise treated in the extant corpus of Greek tragedy: the birth of the god Dionysus. The tragedy is additionally exceptional in that the chorus dominates the play: its five episodes consist of interactions between the chorus and a single actor. In creating such a unique and imaginative 'new' tragedy, Henríquez Ureña had a revolutionary aim: to imitate a style even more ancient than that of Aeschylus, namely that of the tragedian Phrynichus. *El Nacimiento* therefore attempts to recreate not only an older and lost tragic tradition, but also the origins of Greek tragedy itself. Despite being the region's first radical experimentation with ancient Greek tragedy, this play is neglected among the larger oeuvre of Pedro Henríquez Ureña given its perceived mimetic and academic nature,⁷¹ an assumption that is most likely based on the fact that unlike his other works the play does not contain any reference or discussion of any linguistic, social, historical or political realities. It is my aim in this section to provide a much-needed reassessment of this rather neglected piece. I contend that the play should be seen not as a simple academic exercise but rather as an innovative artistic adaptation, an 'extreme' tragedy, which, though written in prose, showcases a provocative way of engaging with ancient material that is otherwise utterly lost. My discussion is centred on Henríquez Ureña's reconstruction of the poeticity of the ancient text and its chorus. Given the dominance of the origins of early Greek tragedy in international tragic scholarship of the early twentieth century,⁷² I argue that with *El Nacimiento* Henríquez Ureña provides a creative answer to the problematic question of the early nature of classical Athenian drama.

After spending several months reading Greek texts, the young men of the *Ateneo* aptly chose to spend their Christmas honouring the birth of Dionysus with original compositions dedicated to him, a new tragedy by Henríquez Ureña and a satyr play by Alfonso Reyes. *El Nacimiento*, which dramatizes the birth of Dionysus, consists of five episodes and four *stasima*, and opens and ends with the chorus who sing an additional *parodos* and *exodos*. Though all episodes stage the interaction between the chorus and a single actor, Henríquez Ureña

included a large cast of mortals and immortals: Semele, Hermes, Cadmus, Iris and Dionysus appear in each respective episode, in dialogue with the chorus. The play charts the birth of the young god, with each episode focused around one stage of the myth: after Semele announces her pregnancy to the chorus, Hermes appears to inform the collective of her death, which is followed by a *kommós* scene in which Cadmus learns of his daughter's passing; the final two episodes turn to the birth of the young god, consisting of an announcement by Iris and an epiphany by Dionysus.⁷³ It is not clear what motivated the Dominican intellectual to engage with Phrynichus, or even whether he knew much beyond the fact that the ancient tragedian preceded Aeschylus.⁷⁴ The choice of Dionysus as subject, however, is more evident, given the party's aim to celebrate the god. The thoughts of Walter Pater, who is cited as an inspiration in the 'justification' which accompanied both published versions of the play,⁷⁵ may have additionally played a role; his essay 'A Study of Dionysus: The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew' (which Henríquez Ureña translated, as discussed above) contains the following dramatic account of the myth of Semele:

Semele, an old Greek word, as it seems, for the surface of the earth, the daughter of Cadmus, beloved by Zeus, desires to see her lover in the glory with which he is seen by the immortal Hera. He appears to her in lightning. But the mortal may not behold him and live. Semele gives premature birth to the child Dionysus; whom, to preserve it from the jealousy of Hera, Zeus hides in a part of his thigh, the child returning into the loins of its father, whence in due time it is born again. Yet in this fantastic story, hardly less than in the legend of Ariadne, the story of Dionysus has become a story of human persons, with human fortunes, and even more intimately human appeal to sympathy.⁷⁶

This appeal to 'humanise' Dionysus may have thus proved compelling. Indeed, this was likewise the case in fifth-century Athens: Aeschylus, for instance, wrote a (now lost) play centred around Semele's pregnancy.⁷⁷ Though it is not known whether Henríquez Ureña knew about this early play (and consequently decided to write an earlier version of it), he was certainly aware of Euripides's *Bacchae*, which is an important source text for this 'new' ancient tragedy.⁷⁸ In fact, both Semele's and Dionysus's first word in their respective episodes is 'vengo' (I come), which directly corresponds to the god's first word in *Bacchae*, "Ἔγω.⁷⁹ In this manner, *El Nacimiento de Dionisos* offers a tantalizing preface to Euripides's tragedy. One might therefore assume that Henríquez Ureña was potentially tempted by the vision of producing a version of Greek tragedy that both begins

and ends with Dionysus; that is, he creates a dramatic text that not only recalls the archaic origins of tragedy through imitation of Phrynichus but also looks forward to one of the latest plays in the extant tragic corpus, Euripides's *Bacchae*.⁸⁰

Henríquez Ureña did not wish merely to reinvent Greek tragedy in modernity, but also to revitalize it by imitating the ancient style of Phrynichus. In creating such a 'belated' tragedy that nevertheless follows an ancient style, Henríquez Ureña is aware that the success of such a drama hinges on two issues: its poeticity and chorus. Regarding the crucial matter of the new play's poetic correspondence to its ancient counterpart, he openly acknowledges that the metre of the original plays is impossible to replicate in Spanish, thus explaining his choice of prose composition:

If this attempt, in a genre that is essentially poetic, is not written in verse, it is due to the difficulty of employing Castilian metres that suggest the poetic forms of the Greeks. I have preferred prose, following the example of many illustrious translators of classical tragedies, one of them no lesser a poet than Leconte de Lisle. With relation to the strophes, antistrophes and epodes, I must remember, that those who judge absurd strophes in prose, that these words originally signified the movements of the chorus.

This declaration of failure by a great metrician like Henríquez Ureña, who would later publish some of the most important metrical studies in Spanish,⁸¹ might distract us from the judicious solutions that he offers throughout *El Nacimiento* in order to retain and translate some of the poetic elements of ancient Greek tragedy. Instead of academically translating the original metres into their closest equivalent in Spanish verse, Henríquez Ureña employs a type of poetic prose as a solution; that is, a prose that consciously makes an effort to evoke verse. Each character, for example, is addressed with various epithets, as the following selections from the *parodos* illustrate:

Cadmus, killer of the dragon, inventor of the graphic signs,
founder of seven-gated Thebes, master of the pacific arts and the
industries of war.

Semele, the thick-haired.

Athena, protectress of cities.⁸²

This is a rhythmic and concise prose, which mimics classical poetry, partly inspired by the translations of Greek by Leconte de Lisle which Henríquez Ureña had read. Similarly, though he is additionally

aware of the impossibility of replicating the ancient Greek chorus, he nevertheless carefully inserts certain aspects that reproduce some of its rhythms. Though he discusses choral strophes and antistrophes as simple markers of movement in the preface to the play,⁸³ his *stasima* nevertheless mimic certain elements found in the extant choral odes of Aeschylus and Euripides, such as their form and the role of repetition. His *parodos*, albeit in prose, is modelled after many lengthy and complex *parodoi* such as that of Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*: it begins with an introductory part that is similar to anapestic openings found in the ancient texts followed by five pairs of strophes, the third of which includes an epode. This *parodos* moreover opens the play, as in Aeschylus's *Persians* and *Suppliant Women*, giving it the form of early extant Greek tragedy. Similarly, the scene of *kommós* with Cadmus that forms the third episode has a strophic form and is guided by the ritual gestures which typically associated with mourning, such as beating the chest and tearing the hair.⁸⁴ Henríquez Ureña has additionally considered the role of ritual cries in extant odes and the forceful impact produced by their repetition: both the strophe and antistrophe of the *parodos*' third strophic pair end with a direct translation of a repeated cry from the *parodos* of Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*: 'Cantemos Ailino, Ailino, pero que venza al fin la buena fortuna' (Sing Ailinus, Ailinus, but let the good prevail),⁸⁵ and the *exodos* is peppered with repeated cries of 'io' and 'evohé'.⁸⁶ This sense of repetition and echo is crucial in the creation of a chorus: as Andrew Ford has pointed out, the echo is fundamental for transforming an otherwise simple word or phrase into a musical art.⁸⁷ By mimicking both the form and repetitive nature of ancient choral odes into his prose tragedy, Henríquez Ureña manages to preserve the musical and ritual function of a Greek chorus.

Though my focus on this section has thus far emphasized the manner in which Henríquez Ureña's artistic prose engages with ancient Greek tragic forms and metrics, it is worth considering whether there is a larger meaning to this play beyond what I have argued here, namely that *El Nacimiento* provides a creative and erudite account of the myth of Dionysus, an intellectual showpiece of sorts. Crucially missing from my discussion is its potential connection to Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, and whether the play, particularly its title, may be a response to Nietzsche or his philosophy. Nietzsche does not figure prominently in Henríquez Ureña's early work: the philosopher features only tangentially in a few essays, typically in holistic considerations of his philosophy and always in comparison to other European thinkers.⁸⁸ Nowhere does Henríquez Ureña expressly cite or discuss *The Birth of Tragedy*; though it is worth noting that he mentions that in 1908 Antonio Caso gave a lecture during which he

presented a thorough summary of Nietzsche's philosophy to the members of the *Ateneo*.⁸⁹ In 1909, Henríquez Ureña would publish a brief essay in *Revista Moderna* entitled 'Nietzsche and Pragmatism' (Nietzsche y el pragmatismo) which contains a series of extended quotes from *Gay Science* with no discussion.⁹⁰ It is therefore difficult to ascribe any deeper meaning to the play, particularly since it was written as a piece to be read specifically to the *Ateneístas* upon the conclusion of their year reading the Greeks. It was later circulated more widely, but once again to an erudite audience, the Latin American readership of *Revista Moderna*. Indeed, its immediate reception corroborates my reading of the play as a clever work of art. Weeks after its premiere at the *Ateneo*'s Christmas party, Henríquez Ureña wrote a letter to Alfonso Reyes recommending him additional reading on the Greek chorus, scholarship that was precisely related to the question of the origins of ancient Greek tragedy.⁹¹ The Uruguayan essayist José Enrique Rodó, one of the most significant Latin American literary figures of the time, praises it as not only one of Henríquez Ureña's best works, but also as 'one of the most beautiful things of the new Hispanic-American literature'.⁹² In neither case is the play connected to deeper philosophical or cultural arguments related to the implications or applications of Hellenism in modernity. Crucially, the Dominican intellectual had wider ambitions beyond Latin America: he sent a signed and dedicated copy of the 1916 published version to Gilbert Murray, a copy which is currently in circulation at the British Library.⁹³ It is unclear what he was aiming to achieve by sending this to Murray; perhaps it was simply a desire to be acknowledged by a scholar of international repute. Henríquez Ureña not only acquired a sound knowledge of international intellectual trends that were geographically and conceptually distant, but he also took 'extreme' steps to become part of the global 'Hellenic' intellectual community through his unique and creative engagement with Greek tragedy's early and lost form.⁹⁴ In many ways, the fact that Henríquez Ureña unapologetically inserts himself into classical scholarly production with such ease, despite his geographical distance, raises questions regarding the assumptions inherent to the *in extremis* model. Should well-educated, well-travelled and superbly connected individuals such as Henríquez Ureña be considered 'outsiders' or 'extreme' readers, simply because they did not reside or primarily operate in a North American or northern European location?

What is instead 'extreme' is his novel manner of engaging with absent classical texts. In an article on the Renaissance reception of Ennius, who likewise survives in scant fragmentary form, Nora Goldschmidt recounts a few cases involving scholars and writers who exploited his 'textual absence' by producing creative forgeries.⁹⁵ As

she discusses, Ennius's absence in a sense invites invention and imagination, and this creativity is indeed what we can see with Henríquez Ureña's *El Nacimiento*. In a play that attempts to copy an absent text which does not exist, precisely through imitation of the traces of texts that do survive, Henríquez Ureña may be also seen as posing various important questions about the afterlife of classical texts and particularly whether they can be reconstructed in modernity. It is no coincidence that his manner of radically engaging with the Greeks later inspired future Latin American treatments of Athenian drama, many of which likewise experimented creatively with ancient Greek myth, as can be seen most notably in Alfonso Reyes's *Ifigenia Cruel*.

Nicola Miller argues that Latin American revolutions have 'tended not to repudiate the past, as happened in France and Soviet Russia, but instead, to stake a claim to transcendent continuity based on creative assimilation of the past'.⁹⁶ What is remarkable with the *Ateneo* is that these intellectuals are invoking a fragmented and forgotten European past during a significant time in modern Mexican history, a past which furthermore carried significant cultural weight around the world. This cultural weight mattered: many of the *Ateneístas* would later continue to champion artistic and aesthetic values as necessary for societal and individual progress, and ancient Greece continued to serve as an important ideological rallying point. Their passionate Hellenism was not based on obtaining a passport to high culture, but rather on the potential of ancient Greek culture to change their present and shape the future. This had important implications for the literature of Spanish Latin America, which until the twentieth century remained grounded in Spanish and French works.⁹⁷ Henríquez Ureña's insistence on the Greeks could therefore be seen as an appeal to reformulate the conception and tradition of the 'classics' in Latin America. In this chapter I have charted the complex ways in which Henríquez Ureña engages with ancient Greece and its complicated legacy during his tenure in the *Ateneo*; what is particularly striking here is the extreme manner that even in these short years his understanding of ancient Greece develops and deepens. Indeed the three sections of this chapter map Henríquez Ureña's increasingly sophisticated negotiation with conceptions of ancient Greece, particularly the manner in which he swiftly moves from acquiring a general knowledge of a known global literary status symbol to engaging both creatively and easily with the intricacies of the early forms and metrics of Greek tragedy. As I additionally highlight, his comfort in handling this European material belies any presumed status of 'extreme' reader that one might wish to apply to him simply because of his geographical distance and 'peripheral' location. Moving to the periphery in this fashion helps us to rethink

the category 'extreme' and interrogate the ease in which those of us in the 'centre' are happy to adopt such labels.

CHAPTER 9

BEYOND THE LIMITS OF ART AND WAR TRAUMA

DAVID JONES'S 'IN PARENTHESIS'

Edith Hall

At 6.00 pm on Monday 11 November 1985, a memorial to the poets of the First World War was unveiled in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey. The unveiler was Ted Hughes, the Poet Laureate; the Oration was delivered by Michael Howard, Oxford's Regius Professor of Modern History. The idea was conceived by the Dean of Westminster, Edward Carpenter, who had originally thought the memorial should name up to seven representative poets. In the event, after consultations with scholars and interested parties, the list contained sixteen: Richard Aldington, Laurence Binyon, Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Gibson, Robert Graves, Julian Grenfell, Ivor Gurney, David Jones, Robert Nichols, Wilfred Owen, Herbert Read, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon, Charles Sorley and Edward Thomas. All had fought in the war and all except Robert Graves were by this time dead. Poems by fourteen of the sixteen writers were read at the ceremony by Hughes and famous actors. The two whose poetry was omitted were Blunden and Jones.¹

Jones's harrowing epic *In Parenthesis* – his literary response to the war in which the total fatalities, in excess of 17 million, dwarfed those of all previous human history – had by 1985 fallen out of fashion. In this essay, after providing background information on this nearly forgotten figure,² I argue that the reason for his masterpiece's fall from grace was that it was perceived as too extreme in every sense. It was a product of extreme trauma suffered in an extreme situation – a man-made death-trap of barbed wire, vermin, machine-gun fire and mud. It took place at the threshold where imperial nations slaughtered each other's menfolk as they struggled to push forward the peripheral edges, the extreme boundaries, of their territorial power, or, as Jones put it in the language of Roman fortifications, to hold 'their crumbling limites intact' (89).³ It could be argued that no authentic literary

response to this unprecedented war should fail, correspondingly, to test the limits of literary sensibility. *In Parenthesis* was extreme in the amount of time it took to write (it was not published until 1937), in length, in acoustic effects, in its collision of realistic detail with numinous supernatural elements, in aesthetic experimentalism, in its chaotic and brutal classicism, in recondite allusiveness, in obscenity of language, in its implicit questioning of the legitimacy of writing poetry about war and in its dispassionate refusal to offer either a coherent critique of militarism or a recognizably partisan political ideology.

The phrase *in extremis* could scarcely more appropriate to the experience of this artist and poet during the First World War. Jones was already considering a conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, of which he became a committed member shortly after the war.⁴ He was thus familiar with the sacrament of ‘extreme unction’, in which those near death are anointed by a priest in their final or ‘extreme’ moments.⁵ But a hundred years ago that phrase still had a related medical application. Military records describing the deaths of men as a result of injuries sustained during combat employed the phrase in a (now near-obsolete) sense to describe a man on the verge of dying: Private Samuel Kelley of the Royal Marine Light Infantry ‘was injured by a shell which took off both his legs below the knees. He also had a scalp wound and fracture of the occiput. He was attended during the action and later removed to the sick bay. He was *in extremis* when seen and died about 2 hours after the action ceased at 9 pm’. Walter Young, a Seaman R.N.R.,

received a perforating wound of the chest, the splinter entered below angle of left scapula behind, perforating pleura lung and ribs behind and in front and lodged below the outer side of left nipple just beneath the skin. He was attended to during the action and later removed at the sick bay. He was *in extremis* and died at 9–30 p.m.⁶

David Jones, whose *In Parenthesis* doppelgänger is Private Ball, was himself badly injured in action (183):

And to Private Ball it came as if a rigid beam of great weight
flailed about his calves, caught from behind by ballista-baulk let
fly or aft-beam slewed to clout gunnel-walker below below below.

When golden vanities make about,

you’ve got no legs to stand on.⁷

He thought it disproportionate in its violence considering the
fragility of us.

The warm fluid percolates between his toes and his left boot

fills, as when you tread in a puddle – he crawled away in the opposite direction.

Jones was never physically strong, and there is even a wry humour underlying his perception of the extremity of the force which took him down as disproportionate ‘considering the fragility of us’. Jones also watched close friends die during or shortly after combat. *In Extremis* would have been as suitable a title as *In Parenthesis*.

The son of a Welsh-speaking printer, Jones was raised in a lower-middle-class suburban London home. He attended state school. He was backward academically and struggled to read; his quicker elder sister, to whom he was devoted, read aloud to him. A favourite was Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome*.⁸ At the age of thirteen, in 1909, he enrolled at Camberwell School of Art, where he developed his natural talents in watercolours and engraving. He enlisted in the 15th battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the battalion known as the London Welsh, on 2 January 1915. He was newly nineteen and had previously tried to enlist twice. The Artists’ Rifles had rejected him because of insufficient chest expansion and the Welsh Horse did not think it helped that he knew nothing about horses. Jones’s father wrote to David Lloyd George, who was still Chancellor of the Exchequer, and drumming up patriotic fervour among the Welsh; soon the inarticulate teenaged art student had enlisted and was being trained at Llandudno.⁹ After mustering near Winchester the whole 38th (Welsh) Division embarked at Southampton for Le Havre in December 1915, trained for a fortnight at Warne, southeast of St Omer, and then moved to the front line at Neuve Chapelle. The battalion eventually moved south in preparation for the Somme offensive of July 1916, when Jones, like his poetic doublet John Ball, was shot in the left leg in the attack on Mametz Wood.¹⁰

This engagement was one of the most brutal of the war. There was prolonged machine-gun fire without intermission and bayonet fighting at close quarters. Jones’s division suffered a staggering 4,000 casualties. Robert Graves also fought in the battle, the aftermath of which he described immediately afterwards: ‘It was full of dead Prussian Guards, big men, and dead Royal Welch Fusiliers and South Wales Borderers, little men. Not a single tree in the wood remained unbroken.’¹¹ Graves’s own poem on Mametz Wood, ‘A Dead Boche’, written in 1916, is conventional in form, yet conveys something of the same physical disgust as Jones’s much later work:

To you who’ d read my songs of War
And only hear of blood and fame,
I’ll say (you’ve heard it said before)
‘War’s Hell!’ and if you doubt the same,

Today I found in Mametz Wood
A certain cure for lust of blood:
Where, propped against a shattered trunk,
In a great mess of things unclean,
Sat a dead Boche; he scowled and stunk
With clothes and face a sodden green,
Big-bellied, spectacled, crop-haired,
Dribbling black blood from nose and beard.¹²

By the end of October 1916 Jones returned to the front, in 1917 seeing action again northwest of Ypres. By this time a bond had developed between the front-line fighters on both sides. All enmity was directed towards army officers and politicians; this may explain the part of the dedication to *In Parenthesis* which honours ‘the enemy front-fighters who shared our pains against whom we found ourselves by misadventure’.¹³ Jones had no interest in institutional politics. But in the poem his unwavering loyalty, focalized viewpoints and subject-matter all relate to the experience of the ordinary soldier, making *In Parenthesis* inescapably political with a small ‘p’. Hirst has defined the distinction between the officers Owen and Sassoon on the one hand and Jones on the other as lying in the common soldier’s uncompromised pride in his gun and sense of responsibility to his regiment.¹⁴ Cohen has identified the contrast between the dispassionate tone of Jones and the other war poets as consisting in Jones’s achievement in ‘forcing the reader to protest rather than doing it for him’, in a manner ‘unlike any other World War I poet’.¹⁵ For the question of whether war should be waged at all he held only generals and statesmen accountable, men whom he despised: ‘Damn them all, all who rule and all who counsel’, he was to write later in *The Dying Gaul*.¹⁶

The commitment shown by Jones to representing in poetry the world of regular soldiers – indeed, turning their squalid everyday rituals into a sacrament which has been repeated since the dawn of time – extends to his extreme colloquialism. In the preface to *In Parenthesis* he speaks with regret about the prudish restrictions which in 1937 still circumscribed the poet’s freedom to represent the blasphemous and bodily swear-words of soldier-speak accurately. He saw these words as constituting a kind of ritualized reiterative language or Homeric formula. He has felt hampered, he writes (xii):

Because the whole shape of our discourse was conditioned by the use of such words. The very repetition of them made them seem liturgical, certainly deprived them of malice, and occasionally, when skilfully disposed, and used according to established but flexible tradition, gave a kind of significance, and even at

moments a dignity, to our speech. Sometimes their juxtaposition in a sentence, and when expressed under poignant circumstances, reached real poetry.

Jones was engaged in the opening stages of Passchendaele. But in February 1918, after a bad dose of trench fever, he was invalided home again. He demobilized on 15 January 1919. On both tours of duty he drew the strange world he found around him, and these drawings certainly entered the psychological crucible from which *In Parenthesis* emerged years later. As Hyne points out, Jones 'was present at a turning-point, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the technological approach to warfare. In some of the drawings therefore we see, as well as the machine-gun and the howitzer, the aeroplane, the 1917 version of the tank and the rather primitive system devised to warn of gas attacks. These drawings are truly the work of 'the man who was on the field'.'¹⁷

The poem follows Private Jones's own experiences from mid-1915 to mid-1916. The first three of the poem's seven parts recount the gathering of his division, their voyage to France and their first deployments after the Iliadic opening of Part 3, in which a spectacular sunrise is followed by a full military parade. Part 4, Christmas 1915, is spent on fatigue duty behind the lines, which is how Jones really spent those days. Part 5 telescopes the actual events of spring 1916: the first, ominous issuing of metal shrapnel helmets (104), the 'quite successful raid' (106), the general alert during an unsuccessful German offensive (108), the outdoor concert (110), the march south to the Somme; an officer's reading of the 'good news' of the initial British success of July 1 (123), when the infantrymen really were 'permitted to cheer'. Part 6 correlates to the confused marching which robbed the battalion of sleep and brought it to battle exhausted, closing with a profoundly Homeric simile comparing the battalion to a ship's crew watching another ship depart while they must beach their vessel, 'turn their eyes from the white in-swell and get down to some job of work' (150). Part 7 is the assault on Mametz Wood on July 10, commencing at 4.15 am, followed by the digging of the trench that afternoon and the shooting of Private John Ball. This merges with the final hallucinatory sequence, initiated by the supernatural figure of the Queen of the Woods who appears and bestows branches from various types of tree on twelve of Jones's dead comrades (185-6). The time changes are insignificant: Jones's battalion entered the trenches on December 19 rather than (as in the poem) Christmas Eve, and Jones did not see what he describes in the wood until 10 July rather than before. He condenses the action slightly.

The action of *In Parenthesis* is therefore bracketed at one end by the

second Battle of Ypres in 1915, and at the other by the climactic finale at Mametz Wood in early July 1916, the first stage of the Battle of the Somme. Ypres haunts the conversations of the men in the poem. In the set-piece section on Christmas 1915, one of the soldiers can't stop returning the conversation to that massacre (78): 'Wipers [Ypres] again./He can't keep off it – like a bloke with a pimple.' At the beginning of Part 5, in June 1916, the tension and foreboding mount as the men wait for action. One says, as he listens to the distant noise of combat (124), that it sounds as though the fighting is 'Worst 'un first Wipers – be a long chalk.'

The protracted butchery of the first Ypres battle had already changed the way people talked about war. During the seven weeks between 14 October and 30 November 1914, the British had suffered 58,155 casualties (7,960 dead, 29,562 wounded and an enormous 17,873 missing). The poison gas of the second battle of Ypres in the following May then made its own terrifying impression. These extreme developments raised for Jones, who was interested in science and technology, the prescient question of whether art could or should respond to the industrialization of war. Can chemicals which kill be aesthetic? As he writes in his preface (xiv):

It is not easy in considering a trench-mortar barrage to give praise for the action proper to chemicals – full though it may be of beauty. We feel a rubicon has been passed between striking with a hand weapon as men used to do and loosing poison from the sky as we do ourselves. We doubt the decency of our own inventions, and are certainly in terror of their possibilities.

In 1942 Jones was to write a fine study of the relationship between Western literature and militarism, 'Art in relation to war'.¹⁸ But in the *In Parenthesis* preface he already stresses that poets had once faced the same challenge with what were to become the standard symbolic objects – the technology and weaponry of Arthurian epic:

We who are of the same world of sense with hairy ass and furry wolf and who presume to other and more radiant affinities, are finding it difficult, as yet, to recognise these creatures of chemicals as true extensions of ourselves, that we may feel for them a native affection, which alone can make them magical for us. It would be interesting to know how we shall ennoble our new media as we have already ennobled and made significance our old – candle-light, fire-light, Cups, Wands, and Swords, to choose at random.

In his own poem we feel him struggling to 'ennoble' the new media of

destruction: he revels in the ‘randomness’ of the items – some related to chemical warfare – stockpiled in the trench dugout he calls home (90):

Picks, shovels, dredging-ladles, carriers, containers, gas-rattles, two of Mrs. Thingumajig’s patent gas-dispersing flappers, emptied S.A.A. boxes, grenade boxes, two bales of revetting-wire, pine stakes; rusted-to-bright-orange barbed wire of curious design – three coils of it; fine good new dark efficient corkscrew staples, splayed-out all ways; three drums of whale oil, the splintered stock of a Mauser rifle, two unexploded yellow-ochre toffee-apples, their strong rods unrusted; three left-leg gum-boots; a Scotch officer’s fine bright bonnet; some type of broken pump, its rubber slack punctured, coiled like a dead slime-beast, reared its brass nozzle out from under rum-jar and picket-maul.

This trove piled haphazardly, half-submerged. You must have a lumber room where you have habitation.

The unique style of *In Parenthesis* is well exemplified by this almost Homeric catalogue of military equipment. The poem’s quality was recognized instantly when it appeared in the late 1930s. It was held, by people whose judgement cannot lightly be dismissed, to be by far the most important literary response to the First World War. Hyperbolic admiration was expressed by such titanic literary figures as W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot (who wrote a complimentary ‘Note of Introduction’ to preface the first edition), W.H. Auden, Graham Greene and Peter Levi.¹⁹ It won the prestigious Hawthornden Prize for imaginative literature in 1938. Yet the poem has also suffered almost incomprehensible extremes of neglect. To my knowledge no classicist except Oswyn Murray has noticed or appreciated it or grappled with its idiosyncratic classicism, part of which is what Murray insightfully identifies as Jones’s ‘obsession with the frontier walls of the Roman empire and their prefigurement of the trenches’.²⁰ Elizabeth Vandiver, regrettably, does not discuss Jones at all in her otherwise commendable 2010 study of the relationship between Greek and Roman literature and poetic responses to the First World War, *Stand in the Trench, Achilles*.



Figure 9.1 Frontispiece to *In Parenthesis* (ink and watercolour, 1937). Copyright the Estate of David Jones and the National Museum of Wales.

One reason for the neglect may be the intensity of the relationship between Jones's poetry and his prolific work as an artist. *In Parenthesis* sometimes presents its classical allusions as an invitation to visualize a work of visual art: the cadaver of lance-corporal Aneurin Lewis is 'more blistered' than 'painted Troy Towers' (155). It is admittedly possible to read *In Parenthesis*, which began as a series of pictures rather than words, in isolation from Jones's paintings and drawings.²¹

But the ink and watercolour frontispiece he created (Figure 9.1) for the poem offers, stylistically, a fast-track route into understanding the impact of his verbal technique: it is thickly textured, pulses with activity and life, gives the impression of chaos only just under aesthetic control, and sits on a cusp between figurative/realist art and symbolism or abstract-expressionism. Every inch is crammed with detail – other soldiers, horses, barbed wire, shovels, rats. The central figure is a half-naked foot soldier, with an injured leg, whose limbs partly fuse with the jagged branches of the menacing wood. They both crucify him and enfold him. And that suggestion of crucifixion lends the image a religious dimension, icon-like and transcendent. There is a poetic, ordered quality and an aspiration to offer a universal meaning. What it represents is not glorious but nor is it despicable: it is men in the process of doing and suffering. It subverts the celebrated war poets across all cultural history by asking in what sense can war legitimately have a poetics, if at all. The picture is the intimate counterpart of the passage where Jones describes taking the first of the two hits he received in the battle at Mametz Wood (179):

You know the bough hangs low, by your bruised lips and the
smart to your cheek bone.

When the shivered rowan fell

you couldn't hear the fall of it.

Barrage with counter-barrage shockt

deprive all several sounds of their identity,

what dark convulsed cacophony

conditions each disparity

and the trembling woods are vortex for the storm;

through which their bodies grope the mazy charnel-ways – seek
to distinguish men from walking trees and branchy moving like a
Birnam copse.

The phrase 'dark convulsed cacophony' reminds us that even to call *In Parenthesis* a 'poetic' response is not without problems: a large proportion of the text is printed, like this passage, as prose which is not only syntactically disjointed but contains few rhythmical qualities which are identifiably 'poetic'.

Critics have been reluctant to designate it a prose poem, but I am not clear why; by the 1930s the genre was well established.²² It may be significant that the earliest manifestations of the form are the passages in prose *within* poetic texts which feature in early Bible translations. The name John Ball is an adaptation of the canonical character who had represented the typical Englishman in political cartoons since the eighteenth century; yet it is also the name of a Lollard rebel priest at the time of the 1381 Peasants' revolt, a rhyming

preacher who came up with the original couplet, 'When Adam delved and Eve span,/Who was then the Gentleman?' This John Ball used the English translations of the Vernacular Latin Bible called the Wycliffe Bible, which features both verse and prose. Jones may have come across Ball in the novel by William Morris (whom he admired), *A Dream of John Ball* (1888). In *In Parenthesis*, in a French bar, Ball's companion asks a 'ma'm'selle' for drinks (he asks in prose). Then, swaying his pelvis 'like a corner-boy', he launches into song (103):

*He shall die
he shall die
 with one
mighty swipe I
will I will
diss-lo-cate his bloody jaw.*

At this point Jones's omniscient narrator, intermittently merged with John Ball, tells us:

He reverts to the discipline of prose.

Jones here draws attention to the jarring hybridity of his form. He is going beyond the very limits of poetry as the other War Poets generally understood it, and as our young are taught to understand it – that is, as rhyming verse in conventional stanzas. He finds these limits inadequate. He revered James Joyce, and it shows. He combines free indirect discourse, dialogue (usually fragments of dialogue), description, sensory evocation and dense allusiveness. This fusion requires, as he puts it, the 'discipline of prose' if it is to do justice to the extreme psychic and physiological bombardment which he had undergone in the trenches and on the Somme, as well as presumably during his own first serious nervous breakdown of 1932, when he was midway through writing the poem.

Jones understood intuitively the impossibility of reconciling the unprecedented experience of the First World War to inherited poetic forms. Only in Jones among the so-called British War Poets does the formal, aesthetic revolution we call Modernism, the ideological expression of the historical, economic and sociopolitical contradictions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, become welded to the historical events in which those contradictions tragically exploded in open military conflict. To put it another way: the First World War and Modernism are inseparable, as military and aesthetic instantiations of the same crisis in the global political order. The crisis involved the apocalyptic collision of forces unleashed by new technologies (the internal combustion engine; aviation;

telecommunications; chemical munitions); it entailed the industrialization of Germany, pressure on the internal geopolitical borders of Europe, the rise of Proletarian radicalism and cracks in the old orders of British, French, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian imperialism. It is hardly surprising that the older literary forms – lyricism and realism in fiction, metre and rhyme in poetry – failed to delimit the aesthetic expression of such a crisis. Yet among the so-called War Poets, Jones is the only figure (except arguably Rosenberg) who can be described as a Modernist. *In Parenthesis* assumes the innovations of Pound in metre and Eliot, especially *The Waste Land* (1922), in atmosphere. The more famous War Poets used conventional poetic structures inherited from the Victorians; for the most part their diction is conventional, even obsolescent.

Their very conventionality, which makes them seem so accessible, is of course one reason why they are so popular: by offering no formal surprises, they are easily learned and performed. More importantly, their generic form keeps the terrible experiences they aesthetically process safe, hermetically sealed in an antiseptic box labelled ‘The Past’. This past is a recognized formal category which makes the First World War the end of an old cultural epoch (the Victorian Age, the British Empire, the world before women and workers were liberated, unironic patriotism morphing into guilt-laden pacificism) rather than the foundation stone of a new epoch (global war, the industrialization of death, nuclear weapons and terrifying racism and nationalism). *In Parenthesis* is an exhausting and arduous read. Reading it after the more famous War Poets is like tackling Joyce’s *Ulysses* after Thomas Hardy. Yet it will always be important precisely because it does so fearlessly attempt to fuse the *appropriate* aesthetic form to the historical moment, the emergent aesthetic consciousness of the epoch of the war with the stress of the physical, lived reality which he experienced as a soldier. As Dudley puts it:

As a result of staging the modern idiom in the *in extremis* of war, Jones applies a greater degree of pressure to it, one that ruptures smaller fissures already sensed in Pound, Joyce, or Eliot. In so doing, Jones is exploding one tension at the heart of modernity: the seeming failure to find a poetic or narrative mode adequate to control and convey the extent and gravity of the problems of the modern world.²³

The aesthetic extremity and the tonal strangeness of *In Parenthesis* were unique achievements, even if they simultaneously explain why it will never appear on GCSE syllabuses or be recited in Westminster Abbey.

This point is best illustrated by the only explicit reference Jones

makes in the work to any other War Poet. The sequence comes in the sixth of the seventh parts, a tense episode in which the soldiers are waiting, terrified, for the Mametz assault (135):

Besides which there was the heavy battery operating just beneath the ridge, at a kept interval of minutes, with unnerving inevitability, as a malign chronometer, ticking off with each discharge an exactly measured progress toward a certain and prearranged hour of apocalypse.

Here Jones strains to evoke the topics they discussed way back then, as they tried to calm their nerves: John Ball is talking to two of his closest companions, a man with the Lewis guns (a newly invented light machine-gun), and the most educated and intellectual of those we meet, Signaller Olivier (139–40):

These three seldom met except for very brief periods out of the line – at Brigade rest perhaps – or if some accident of billeting threw them near together. These three loved each other, but the routine of their lives made chances of fore-gathering rare. These two with linked arms walked together in a sequestered place above the company lines and found a grassy slope to sit down on. And Signaller Olivier came soon and sat with them. And you feel a bit less windy.

They talked of ordinary things. Of each one's friends at home; those friends unknown to either of the other two. Of the possible duration of the war. Of how they would meet and in what good places afterwards. Of the dissimilar merits of Welshmen and Cockneys. Of the diverse virtues of Regular and Temporary Officers. Of if you'd ever read the books of Mr Wells. Of the poetry of Rupert Brooke. Of how you really couldn't very well carry more than one book at a time in your pack. Of the losses of the Battalion since they'd come to France. Of the hateful discomfort of having no greatcoats with fighting-order, of how bad this was. Of how everybody ought rightly to have Burberry's, like officers. Of how German knee boots were more proper to trench war than puttees. Of how privileged Olivier was because he could manage to secrete a few personal belongings along with the signaller's impedimenta. Of how he was known to be a favourite with the Regimental and how he'd feel the draught if he were back with his platoon. Of whether they three would be together for the Duration, and how you hoped so very much indeed. Of captains of thousands and of hundreds, of corporals, of many things. Of the Lloyd George administration, of the Greek, who Olivier said was important, of whom John Ball had never

previously heard.²⁴ Of the neutrality of Spain. Of whether the French nation was nice or nasty. Of whether anyone would ever get leave and what it would be like if you did. Of how stripes, stars, chevrons, specialisations, jobs away from the battalion, and all distinguishing marks were better resisted for as long as possible. Of how it were best to take no particular notice, to let the stuff go over you, how it were wise to lie doggo and to wait the end.

The mention of Brooke is historically accurate. He had come to sudden fame when on 11 March 1915 the *Times Literary Supplement* had published two of his sonnets ('IV: The Dead' and 'V: The Soldier'). 'The Soldier' had then been read on Easter Sunday, 4 April, from the pulpit of St Paul's Cathedral, shortly before Brooke died of blood poisoning on the island of Skyros. Brooke's *1914 & Other Poems*, containing the five famous sonnets, was published the following month and was reprinted no fewer than eleven times before the end of 1915. Yes, his verses were in the minds of the men who went to fight on the Somme. But no, verses like his could no longer be adequate to an emotionally honest trenches survivor like Jones trying to memorialize those days in the literary idiom of the post-war epoch.

A similar point can be made by thinking about the ancient Greek and Roman presences in the poem. They are relatively slight, certainly in comparison with those of medieval Arthurian literature and the presentation of John Ball and his companions as the heroes of knightly legend. In the first of the seven parts, the only certain invocation of classics comes when Ball and his comrades are on parade while assembling for embarkation to France (6). The band plays. 'Broken catches on the wind-gust came shrilly back: *Of Hector and Lysander and such great names as these* – the march proper to them.' This well-known line belongs to 'The British Grenadiers', the traditional eighteenth-century marching song of all British fusilier companies, following 'Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules'. The proper names Hector and Alexander later crop up in banter between the men: 'When did they pass you out Hector-boy'; 'They get warmed to it – they're well away in tactics and strategy and the disciplines of the wars – like so many Alexanders' (78). So these classical warriors are part *both* of the realistic fragmentary soundscape Jones evokes *and* of his diachronic vision of war – a vision which presents the First World War as an unavoidable, ritualized confrontation replaying an atavistic human urge to combat going back to the songs of antiquity. That is, the evocations of the past generations of warriors are fundamental to the poem's objective humanism, an objective humanism however fused, in Jones's unique manner, with a more mysterious, sacramental

contorts 'the comic mask of these tragic japers' (60) and the 'masked face' of a dying soldier in Mametz Wood (166). When Jones is differentiating the responses of an educated lance-corporal, Aneurin Lewis, from humble private Watcyn (88), we hear that Watcyn knew nothing of classical or medieval epic lays, 'was innocent of his descent from Aeneas, was unaware of Geoffrey Arthur and his cooked histories, or Twm Shon Catti for the matter of that – which pained his lance-corporal friend, for whom Troy still burned, and sleeping kings return'. At the climactic conclusion of Part 2, Jones is being dressed down for failing to address his superior officer correctly, when he experiences at close-hand his first exploding shell in an outstanding page of prose poetry (24) in which the notion of the weapon as 'Pandoran' adds a deep mythic and temporal resonance: 'Out of the vortex, rifling the air it came – bright, brass-shod, Pandoran; with all-feeling screaming the howling crescendo's up-piling snapped.' Towards the end he muses on the terrible injuries suffered by those who did survive and compares the march-pasts of war veterans in one deft word with the military processions of ancient Rome (176): 'Give them glass eyes to see and synthetic spare parts to walk in the Triumphs, without anyone feeling awkward and O, O, O, it's a lovely war with poppies on the up-platform for a perpetual memorial of his body.'

In the third Part, Jones describes the way that the 'rat of no-man's-land' and birds 'whose proud eyes watched the broken emblems droop and drag dust' join the soldiers in a process of Ovidian physical transformation as they acclimatise to the distorted, unnatural world of the trenches and 'suffer with us this metamorphosis' (54). But the richest seam of classical allusions of *In Parenthesis* is delayed until the section which is also the most formally 'poetic', if this quality is defined in terms of abbreviated colometry and sustained rhetorical flow. This is the boast of Dai Greatcoat, Jones's homage to the 'flyting' speech of Diomedes to Glaucus in the *Iliad* book 6 as well as an ironic salute to David Lloyd-George, who had personally helped Jones enlist but, more importantly, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had pressed for Britain to intervene in the war in support of Belgium. Dai proclaims his qualifications for the status of warrior, citing the participation of himself and his forefathers in the entire history of biblical and European warfare, mingling his Hebrew, classical and Welsh historical narratives with dizzying abandon. His fathers, he tells us, fought with the Black Prince of Wales, with Abel against Cain. Dai himself 'built a shit-house for Artaxerxes', the Persian King from 404 until 358 BCE who vanquished his brother in Xenophon's *Anabasis* and was famous for initiating architectural projects at Susa and Ecbatana (78–9). Dai fought with the biblical Saul, who was armed like Saint

Derfel of Wales; he fought (80) 'in the standing wheat in Cantium' (Kent, where Julius Caesar landed in 55 BCE). He opens a passage mostly consisting of a list of Arthurian battles at places with Latin names (e.g. 'in regione Linnuis'), drawn from the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*, with a claim to have been 'Socrates, my feet are colder than you think on this Potidaean duck-board'. He associates himself with the army of the Trojan exile Brutus who 'dugged the outer vallum' at 'Troy Novaunt' (81), and with the giant-king Brân of Welsh mythology (82) and his sister Branwen, whose marriage to the King of Ireland caused a catastrophic war. He fought with the Archangel Michael in the War in Heaven described in Revelation 12:7–13 but he also 'served Longinus that Dux bat-blind and bent; the Dandy Xth are my regiment' (83–4). Longinus was the blind soldier who according to Roman Catholic tradition pierced the crucified Jesus's side with a spear, and the Tenth Legion were much favoured by Julius Caesar, fighting under him in almost every battle of the Gallic War.

Dai's uncommon aria on past military exploits, at the centre of a poem of which the aesthetics look determinedly forwards into the future, anchors the action at a fixed point in a transhistorical process which stretches way back to the earliest conflicts recorded in European literature and even beyond. This diachronic perspective is bound up with Jones's identity as an Anglo-Welshman fighting in the Welsh Fusiliers. In the preface (x) he says that he went to war alongside Londoners and Welshmen, who bore together in their bodies 'the genuine tradition of the Island of Britain ... Those are before Caractacus was'. The Caractacus allusion recalls the use of the defiant Briton Caractacus, celebrated by Tacitus, in early twentieth-century British imperial propaganda; Caractacus became melded in the public imagination with the spirit of the Welsh-speaking Lloyd George, and the Caractacus story was used to foster an appetite for joining up among the Welsh working class. In the wake of Elgar's cantata *Caractacus* (1898) there had been an Edwardian craze for school plays and amateur theatricals, often in Welsh, arousing Welsh boys to martial valour. The most famous and influential of these plays was by Beriah Gwynfe Evans, who also wrote a hagiography of Lloyd-George.²⁵ Such dramas usually fused two episodes in Tacitus. First, his account in *Annals* 12 of the combat between the Roman general Publius Ostorius Scapula and the Silures, 'a naturally fierce people and now full of confidence in the might of Caractacus, who by many an indecisive and many a successful battle had raised himself far above all the other generals of the Britons', and Caractacus's defiant speech in the Roman forum. The second episode is Tacitus's completely separate account in 14.29–30 of the revolt of the Iceni in 62 CE, under Nero.

But it is the climax of *In Parenthesis* which contains the most emotionally intense engagements with classical war poetry, in a sequence which places the *Aeneid* inescapably before us. John Ball, who shares Jones's skill at draughtsmanship, contemplates the wooded grove where the direct combat is later to take place. And he turns into an avatar of Virgil's Aeneas on his quest for the golden bough growing on a tree within the sanctuary of Diana of the Wood, Diana Nemorensis, near Aricia in the Alban hills (*Aeneid* 6.136–8; *In Parenthesis* 66–7), a mythical journey made even more famous by inspiring the title and intellectual project of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890)²⁶:

Keep date with the genius of the place – come with a weapon or effectual branch – and here this winter copse might well be special to Diana's Jack, for none might attempt it, but by perilous bough-plucking.

Draughtsman at Army made note on a blue-print of the significance of that grove as one of his strong-points; this wooded rise as the gate of their enemies, a door at whose splintered posts, Janus-wise emplacements shield an automatic fire.

In the mirror: below the wood, his undulating breastworks all along, he sees and loses, thinks he sees again, grey movement for the grey stillness, where the sand-bag wall dipped a little.

Anyone among Jones's readers familiar with either the *Aeneid* or Frazerian anthropology will understand that terrible violence is about to take place here. At Aricia, each successive priest of Diana, each 'King of the Wood' (Rex Nemorensis) was replaced in the cult when a runaway slave mounted a challenge and then killed the incumbent priest in a ritual sacrifice taking the form of single combat. The allusion to the grey 'mirror' which Ball thinks he sees beneath the sand-bag walls calls to mind the great circular Lake Nemi at Aricia, which made such an impression on Britons who toured classical sites in Italy in the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Turner's watercolour of 1840 shows the classical ruins in the lower right-hand section, while a girl tends her goats beside the mirror-like disc of water high in the Alban hills. Macaulay's poem 'The Battle of the Lake Regillus' in *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) helped young Victorians and Edwardians, including Jones, embed the grim succession ritual of the King of the Wood in their memories:

The still glassy lake that sleeps
Beneath Aricia's trees
Those trees in whose dim shadow
The ghastly priest doth reign,

The priest who slew the slayer,
And shall himself be slain.

The 'golden bough' sequence of *In Parenthesis* now segues into another classical vision seen by Ball at the wood:

His eyes turned again to where the wood thinned to separate
broken
trees; to where great strippings-off hanged from tenuous fibres
swaying, whitened to decay – as swung
immolations
for the northern Cybele.
The hanged, the offerant:
 himself to himself
 on the tree.

Whose own,
whose grey war-band, beyond the stapled war-net –
(as grey-banded rodents for a shelving warren – cooped in their
complex runnels, where the sea-fret percolates).
Come from outlandish places,
from beyond the world,
from the Hercynian –
they were at breakfast and were cold as he, they too made their
dole.

The descent into the lethal Underworld of Mametz Wood is made more sinister by the image of vegetation swinging from trees like sacrifices for a northern Cybele, the ancient near eastern goddess for whom men voluntarily castrated themselves; the German foe are called men from outlandish places beyond even Hercynia. The passage and the description of the gateway to the trenches as (44) 'this gate of Mars armipotente, the grisly place, like flat painted scene in top-lights' crude disclosing' are both informed by W.F. Jackson Knight's translation of *Aeneid* 7.601–5, on the twin Roman Gates of War (as a fellow Roman Catholic, Jones was deeply influenced by this classical scholar and expert on Virgil and Augustine):

There was a sacred custom in Latium, Land of the West, which
the Alban Cities continuously observed, and Rome, supreme in all
the world, observes today when Romans first stir Mars to engage
battle, alike if they prepare to launch war's miseries with might
and main on Getae, Hyrcanians, or Arabs, or to journey to India,
in the track of dawn, and to bid the Parthians hand our standards
back. There are twin Gates of War, for by that name men call
them; and they are hallowed by men's awe and the dread

presence of heartless Mars. A hundred bars of bronze, and iron's tough, everlasting strength, close them, and Janus, never moving from that threshold, is their guard. When the senators have irrevocably decided for battle, the consul himself, a figure conspicuous in Quirine toga of State and Gabine cincture, unbolts these gates, and their hinge-posts groan; it is he who calls the fighting forth, then the rest of their manhood follows, and the bronze horns, in hoarse assent, add their breath.²⁷

For Jones, the First World War was a great sacrificial offering to both Diana of the Wood and Cybele of the North but also the latest in the perpetual re-opening of the primordial Gates of War, consecrated to Mars.

The poem's strong affinity with a mythical *nekuia* reminds us that the descent to the Underworld had become one of the most 'the single most important myth for Modernist authors'.²⁸ T.S. Eliot said that Tiresias was the unifying figure of the nightmarish *The Waste Land* (1922), at 'the evening hour that strives/Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea'.²⁹ In 1935 Ezra Pound, whose first *Canto* begins with Tiresias, said that the *nekuia* was an atavistic remembering of primeval rites capable of putting us in touch with the earliest Mediterranean sensibilities.³⁰ Joyce in the Hades chapter of *Ulysses* 'represented the material and spiritual dislocations produced by Western capitalism as an infernal condition',³¹ and one which led directly to the hellish trenches of the First World War. And Jones's poem portrays a *katabasis* which has no corresponding *anabasis*, except the unachievable goal of 'ascendancy' over the enemy after climbing upwards from a trench and 'over the top' (114):

It all went west with the tin-hat – that harbinger of their anabasis,
of these latter days, of a more purposed hate, and the
establishment of unquestioned ascendancy in no-man's-land.

Jones's *katabasis* is the journey into the darkness of Mametz Wood, in the final, seventh section finally called simply 'the dark wood' (165), in a resounding echo of the *selva oscura* of the second line of the *Inferno* of Dante Alighieri. On the approach to and inside the dark wood, John Ball is injured and many of his comrades die. This climactic section opens in Latin, with allusions to two passages of the vulgate Latin Bible: *invenimus eum in campis silvae* (we have found it in the fields of the woods), which in Psalm 131.6 refers to the tabernacle David vows to build for God. Then come the evocative words from the Vulgate version of the Lamentations of Jeremiah for the fall of Jerusalem, *matribus suis dixerunt: ubi est triticum et vinum? cum deficerent quasi vulnerati ... cum exhalarent animas suas in sinu matrum*

suarum. (They say to their mothers, Where is grain and wine? When they swoon as the wounded ... /When their soul is poured out into their mothers' bosom.)

For it must be emphasized that despite all the classicism of the *katabasis* and Dai Greatcoat sequences, Jones's *In Parenthesis* is also a profoundly Christian poem, partly structured on the ritual sequence of the Eucharist. It reflects its author's devout Roman Catholic religious outlook, and abounds in sacramental imagery.³² But its classicism functions to reveal Christianity to be an outgrowth of a far earlier, pagan theology. The 'Christmas' sequence is introduced thus (65):

It was yet quite early in the morning, at the time of Saturnalia,
when men properly are in winter quarters, lighting His birthday
candles – all a green-o.

When children look with serious eyes on brand-new miracles,
and red berry sheen makes a Moses-bush, to mirror in multiplicity
the hearth-stones creature of fire.

For the conjurings of ancient Greece and Rome are above all crucial to the poem's peculiarly objective tone, its gaze like children 'with serious eyes'. It is not a patriotic poem. It is not a protest poem. It is certainly not a pacifist poem. The war may have been senseless, even absurd, but the men who fought in it were not.

In one of the finest passages, Jones defines, I think, what he is trying to do (88–9; the passage needs to be read in the knowledge that the Arthurian knight mentioned, Ewein, diverted streams of water to create fountains to flow over Merlin's stone):

This was a country where men from their first habitation had not
to rest, but to always dyke and drain if they would outwit the
water, or leave the place to fowl and amphibious beasts. It was a
bad country to contend in, when such contention most required a
way of life below the ground. Yet by fascinated track they come to
within their walls. They labour with the bulging gabions, they
ladle and wattle: like Ewein, they are familiar with the path of a
water-course; they make conduits, they divert and block and
restore the breaches. Two armies face and hold their crumbling
limites intact. They're worthy of an intelligent song for all the
stupidity of their contest. A boast for the dyke keepers, for the
march wardens.

In Parenthesis is indisputably an 'intelligent song' to celebrate the deeds of the warriors of the Somme; 'the stupidity of their contest' is not the point at issue. It is not that the infantrymen do not suffer and do not experience powerful emotions. But their varied voices, and

Ball's intermittently prominent consciousness, along with the subdued, Homerically non-judgemental omniscient narrator, combine to present the appalling events with a curious detachment. Despite its use of epigraphs to each of its seven sections taken from *Y Gododdin*, a medieval Welsh poem attributed to the bard Aneirin, and consisting of elegies to the men who fell at the battle of Catraeth in about 600 CE, *In Parenthesis* is not itself elegiac.³³ Nor is its vision predominantly tragic: there is no attempt to investigate the *causes* of the suffering and absolutely no emotive lingering on physical or psychic trauma. There is, however, a conspicuous reference to Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy, in the very final sequence. After Ball is wounded, his thoughts veer between the stretcher-bearers removing him from battle and the hospital to which he is taken, where (186) 'Mrs. Willy Hartington has learned to draw sheets and so has Miss Melpomené; and on the south lawns, men walk in red white and blue under the cedars and by every green tree and beside comfortable waters'.

Miss Melpomené belongs not to the sufferings of battle but to the future of the wounded soldier, to the period of recuperation. She was one of the figures from the poem whom Jones sketched in the manuscript – one of his many instantiations of an eternal goddess-figure, alluring, mythic, mysterious, part Helen of Troy, part Diana of the Woods, part Virgin Mary. She has a Modernist precedent in Molly Bloom of James Joyce's 1922 *Ulysses*, 'Gea-Tellus, fulfilled, recumbent', and she prefigures the Ur-matriarchal divinity proposed in *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (1948) by that other Mametz Wood survivor, Robert Graves.³⁴

For, despite all the squalid accumulated details about the environment and everyday routines of the men in the trenches, *In Parenthesis* does lend war, although no sentimental, crudely sacrificial, elegiac or tragic overtones, a *metaphysical* aspect. This emerges as a strange relationship between the men who wage it and its abstraction or symbolic expression as a mysterious, eternal feminine principle, simultaneously mother, lover and female genius loci.³⁵ Dai Greatcoat's speech fused into one female 'toast of the Rig'ment' a woman called 'Helen Camulodunum' (at the Battle of Camulodunum, the British Iceni massacred the Ninth Legion of the Roman army in 61 CE), the Virgin Mary under her Roman Catholic title 'Mediatrix', a figure from a popular proverbial rhyme ('clement and loving, she's Friday's child, she's loving and giving'), and the Welsh folktale heroine Elen Luyddawg, also known as Saint Helen of Caernarfon (80–1):

She's the girl with the sparkling eyes, she's the Bracelet Giver,
she's a regular draw with the labour companies, whereby the
paved army-paths are hers that grid the island which is her

dower. Elen Luyddawg she is – more she is than Helen Argive.

But Jones's eternally recurring feminine principle also appears in the form of Argive Helen's sister Penelope, waiting at home with the family dog, the 'mademoiselle at Croix Barbée' waiting for her man to return, one of the 'green girls in broken keeps' who 'have only mastiff-guards' (35).

Men have always offered themselves up to the feminine archetypal figure, half-way between gentle nun and lascivious whore, whom Jones chillingly calls 'sweet sister death' (162–3):

But sweet sister death has gone debauched today and stalks on
this high ground with strumpet confidence, makes no coy veiling
of her appetite but leers from you to me with all her parts
discovered.

By one and one the line gaps, where her fancy will – howsoever
they may howl for their virginity she holds them – who impinge
less on space sink limply to a heap nourish a lesser category of
being like those other who fructify the land like Tristram Lamorak
de Galis Alisand le Orphelin Beaumains who was youngest or all
of them in shaft-shade at strait Thermopylae or the sweet brothers
Balin and Balan embraced beneath their single monument.

The technological ways in which they wage it may have changed for ever in the First World War, especially in the chlorine gas at Ypres. But war was, is, and perhaps always will be. Spartan Greeks, cracking jokes about fighting in the shade of the Persians' myriad arrows, sacrificed themselves at Thermopylae; Arthurian knights died in the battle charges of the Middle Ages. In order to treat the instance in which he participated with the respect and intelligence it deserves Jones ultimately evokes, if lightly, the ancient metaphor of combat as sexual coitus. As he puts it himself in the Preface, authors who wrote about fighting in the past had no problem with this analogy (xv), since 'for them the embrace of battle seemed one with the embrace of lovers'.

The unique status of *In Parenthesis* as a thoroughgoing Modernist poem on the First World War, and by a combatant, has elicited a few fine critical responses from scholars of English and Comparative Literature.³⁶ But much damage was done to its reputation by Paul Fussell's obtuse critique in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), a cult book which has for years been routinely cited in every First World War bibliography. Labelling it an 'honourable miscarriage', Fussell claimed, bafflingly, that Jones merely reproduced the medieval chivalry of the late Victorian period and re-used its high diction without irony:

The trouble is that the meddling intellect, taking the form this time of a sentimental Literary Arthurianism after Tennyson and Morris, has romanticised the war. If we place *In Parenthesis* next to Masfield's *Gallipoli*, with its panoply of epigraphs from *The Song of Roland*, we can see its kinship with documents which are overtly patriotic and even propagandistic.³⁷

This is about as tone-deaf a response to poetic diction as it is possible to imagine. It needs to be corrected by Robichaud's patient demonstration that Jones's response to the Middle Ages, far from being derivatively romantic, is profoundly innovative;³⁸ it marks a violent break with pre-Raphaelite medievalism by seeing the chivalric age through a Modernist lens. The same, as I have tried to show here, can be said of Jones's classicism. Murray also realized that Fussell was mistaken, but for a different reason. Murray's interpretation correctly points out that Jones was trying to make sense of human experience and never aspired to create 'literature'.³⁹ He stressed to a friend in 1962 that no critic had ever yet understood 'the altogether different point of departure of my stuff "from the writing or poetry" or "prose" as conceived by "writers", whether good or bad, from blokes like Rupert Brooke right on through Sassoon and even Owen and Graves and even T.S.E. It is next to impossible for me to indicate what the difference is'.⁴⁰ If we listen hard to *In Parenthesis* we can hear that difference at work in a painstaking, Herculean, craftsman-like attempt to use words to evoke authentically the sustained extremes of trench warfare, some unusually disturbing material and psychological experiences, and find in that act of authentic evocation a poetics – even a metaphysics – of human courage and competence. These are worthy of an intelligent song despite the stupidity of the contest.

To make that song as intelligent as the combatants in the First World War deserved, Jones took twenty years, during which he suffered mental problems, travelled to France and Jerusalem and also read avidly. By 1937 the books in his personal collection included not only numerous volumes related to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Chaucer, the Arthurian legends, the history of Christianity and Welsh language and literature, but many on classical mythology and Roman Britain. There was also a large group of translations from and studies of classical authors: a Latin grammar, a Latin dictionary, a Greek grammar, a dictionary of New Testament Greek, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Augustine's *Confessions*, Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides's *Trojan Women* (1916), all of Caesar's writings, the *Aeneid*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Horace, Lucretius and a volume of Warmington's *Remains of Old Latin*.⁴¹

Jones's systematic process of self-education across those two

decades between fighting and publishing *In Parenthesis* transformed its allusive depth and cultural complexity, but he explained its title thus:

This writing is called 'In Parenthesis' because I have written it in a kind of space between – I don't know between quite what – but as you turn aside to do something; and because for us amateur soldiers (and especially for the writer, who was not only an amateur, but grotesquely incompetent, a knocker-over of piles, a parade's despair) the war itself was a parenthesis – how glad we thought we were to step outside its brackets at the end of '18 – and also because our curious type of existence here is altogether in parenthesis.⁴²

War takes place between outbreak and peace treaty. Life takes place between the brackets constituted by birth and death. But in retrospect it is difficult not to see Jones's poem as created in the parenthesis between the two World Wars. The new order which emerged from the first created the circumstances which made the second inevitable. Old monarchies were replaced by shaky republics and governments with extended powers which became breeding grounds for ethnic nationalism and resentment about the national boundaries demarcated under the Versailles Treaty. The crumbling of the old European world empires abroad seemed reflected in the financial ruin and demoralization of the European continent at home. And in a picture now in the Tate Gallery ([Figure 9.2](#)) which Jones completed just after the beginning of the Blitz in 1941, and which has powerful correspondences with the frontispiece to *In Parenthesis*, the connection between the two wars is made terrifyingly visual.⁴³ It is centred on a female nude of a full-bodied, Rubens-esque type which he had drawn several times before.⁴⁴ But this one he entitled just 'Aphrodite', after considering titles reflecting his belief in a universal type of the goddess 'Aphrodite Pandemos: The Triple Goddess', 'Turan' (the Etruscan love goddess) and 'The Lady', names inscribed on the back of the only known study for the work (also held in the Tate Gallery).⁴⁵ A friend suggested 'Aphrodite in Aulis' in 1949, the title by which it has been subsequently known, since Jones accepted the implicit allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia enthusiastically.



Figure 9.2 'Aphrodite in Aulis' (pencil, ink and watercolour on paper, 1941).
Copyright the Estate of David Jones and the Tate Gallery, London.

At the centre stands Aphrodite, with the crescent moon and stars belonging to the Madonna of Revelation 12, a cult figure in whom Jones wrote that he wanted to embrace 'all female cult figures, all goddesses rolled into one, mother-figure and *virgo inter virgines*, the pierced woman and mother and all her foretypes'.⁴⁶ She is shackled by one ankle to the sacrificial altar on which she stands, as the statue of Aphrodite was shackled in her temple at Sparta (Pausanias 3.15.22). Like the soldier in the frontispiece, she seems wholly trapped within a chaotic frame crammed with disturbing detail. A crumbling classical

edifice with four columns, in each of the classical orders, seems to represent the threatened disintegration of civilization. The barrage balloon in the top left-hand corner signals the new technology of the new war, and there are soldiers and arms from many periods of history. But by far the most prominent, in the foreground, are the British and German soldiers with the uniform and equipment of the First World War. This Aphrodite, a signifier of the transhistorical lust for war, drawn from the ancient Greek world, occupies the parenthetical space on the canvas between the brackets constituted by the men in the trenches and the barrage balloon, respectively. As in *In Parenthesis*, in this picture Jones employs artistic form and the diachronic depth offered by classical imagery to crystallize and lend permanence to the acute psychological and physical turmoil undergone by soldiers, across time, *in extremis*.

CHAPTER 10

CLASSICS DOWN THE MINESHAFT

A BURIED HISTORY

Henry Stead

Since the eighteenth century and the onset of deep mining, British miners have worked at and indeed beyond the limits of our habitable world. With the huge demand for coal that fuelled the Industrial Revolution, and aided by the technology that came with it, miners dug down ever deeper into the earth's crust to extract its precious ores and minerals. The experience of minework is extreme not only in the geospatial sense, but also by dint of the physical severity of the work itself. The work was so severe that until it was normalized locally it attracted only the most desperate and dispossessed, thus creating a new and visibly identifiable class of the working poor.¹ Those engagements with ancient Greek and Roman culture that took place in the usually isolated and deprived communities surrounding the pits might justifiably therefore be considered extreme. But what is perhaps most *extreme* about the miner classics of the industrial age is its marginality, which is bound up with the simple fact that it seems so very unlikely.

Why should a miner earn six pounds a week?
Leisure! They'd only spend it in a bar!
Standard of life! You'll never teach them Greek,
Or make them more contented than they are!²

This poem by Sassoon, although a parody of the opinion of out-of-touch and 'port-flushed' dons reacting to strike action, neatly represents the class-based preconceptions of the miner's low level of cultural interest and intellectual capacity.

The kinds of cultural engagement miner classics represent for the most part took place so far from the centre of the historical and cultural maps of our time that their very existence is called into

question. Jonathan Rose's groundbreaking study *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001) has done much to challenge the casual stereotyping of working-class cultural experience and to illuminate the 'intellectual life' of British workers, but the extent of the classical experience of members of mining communities between the 1750s and 1950s remains buried.³ One reason for this is that miner classics operated beyond the social horizons of those middle- and upper-class men frequently supposed to have been the sole beneficiaries of the classical education and the primary consumers of those 'high' cultural artefacts that appear to have required such an education to be fully appreciated.

Over the course of this chapter we shall visit several sites of interaction between mineworkers and the ancient Greek and Roman classics. Beyond simply attesting to their existence, assessment of these interactions will cast some light on Graeco-Roman antiquity's curious appeal to the mineworker of the period. But first I should contextualize this somewhat niche line of inquiry. The research into miner classics was undertaken when working with Edith Hall on her AHRC-funded project 'Classics and Class in Britain 1789–1939' (C&C). The project was designed 'to provoke a shift in the perception of the history of British classics, away from a conservative tradition of institutionalized elitism towards a brighter history of broadly inclusive cultural practice and inspired creativity'.⁴ By admitting that the educational discipline of classics played a role in social division it is sometimes understood that it separated those who could, for example, read Latin verse, or parse a Greek verb, from those who could do neither of these things. Classical education was, however, a tool of division suited for closer work than binary distinction. It did, of course, have the capacity to distinguish between the leisured and working classes, but more importantly than this (especially from the Industrial Revolution onwards), it also had the power to differentiate between the various and sometimes subtle ranks and affiliations of the middle and upper classes. Classically based persecution of working-class and lower-middle-class protagonists is prevalent in fiction produced by middle-class writers for the simple reason that it was the middle classes who suffered most sharply from it.

Classical knowledge has also been effectively weaponized at various points in British history, but perhaps most effectively in the cultural wars surrounding the Revolution in France. Persecution based on the class-symbolic power of the classical was a mainstay of Romantic-era periodical publications, and throughout the era served conservative interests by disingenuously painting political radicals and reformers as uneducated fools from the wrong part of town.⁵ Such polarizations are fascinating in their own right and show just how contested the classics

can become. They, however, also inadvertently divert attention from the majority of popular experience of classical culture in Britain.⁶

While, as Richard Hoggart warns – it is important to avoid the temptation ‘to see every second working-class man as a Felix Holt or a Jude the Obscure’,⁷ it is also important not to underplay the cultural significance of the kinds of interaction with antiquity enjoyed by the relatively ‘unexceptional’ and ‘ordinary’ person. Lower-class engagements with Greek and Roman antiquity may take a different form than those of members of the educated elite, but en masse simply must have greater implications for cultural dynamics than the comparatively few engagements of the elite.⁸ You do not, for example, have to be Felix or Jude (or Gildersleeve for that matter) in order to marvel at the Elgin Marbles, or listen to a translation of Homer’s *Iliad*.

The often mythologizing and formulaic (‘zero to hero’) nineteenth-century biographical genre tends also to exaggerate the extraordinariness of working-class classical experience, when in most nineteenth-century communities, including pit villages and nearby towns, any education beyond the ‘three Rs’ involved learning at least some Latin, and when certain engagements with classical culture, for example in public architecture, were not so easily avoided in a Britain obsessed with its classical cultural heritage. This chapter therefore reminds us that the kinds of cultural engagements addressed in the present volume, all of which are perceived to have taken place *in extremis* might not have been so ‘extreme’ after all. This said, there were most definitely considerable problems with basic literacy in mining communities, especially in the earlier half of our period.

The miners’ example is at one and the same time *extraordinary*, in the sense that their working day was – especially up until the final decades of the nineteenth century – uniquely dangerous and physically wearing, and *representative* of the ‘ordinary’ in the sense that the same social pressures and inequalities of opportunity were acting upon them as upon any other large-scale British industrial community in the long nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The extremity and starkness of their struggle against the shadowy forces of capital is no doubt what drew Marx to focus on their exploitation in such detail in Part 4 of *Capital* Volume 1.⁹ Indeed Marx conceived of *Capital*’s central undertaking as a *katabasis*, or heroic descent to the underworld, in which he himself was the reader’s guide through the murky realm of production beneath the apparently paradisiacal surface realm of capitalist society.

The visible world, or ‘sphere of circulation or commodity exchange’, Marx calls ‘a very Eden of the innate rights of man’, where everybody ‘works together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal, and in the common interest’.¹⁰ The reader’s descent to the underworld, or

the ‘hidden abode of production’, begins the quest of learning ‘the secret of profit-making’. The *katabasis* does important work for Marx here partly because the implied departure from *our* world encourages the reader to rid herself of preconceptions and be free to witness the darker realm of production with fresh eyes. The descent takes us into another world where different rules apply, rules that shape our world as much as its own. As if by magic, Marx explains:

A certain change takes place, or so it seems, in the physiognomy of our *dramatis personae*. He who was previously the money-owner now strides out in front as a capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his worker. The one smirks self-importantly and is intent on business; the other is timid and holds back, like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing else to expect but – a tanning.¹¹

We may employ our own Marxist katabatic configuration by envisioning the surface world as the one of preconceived notions: that nineteenth-century workers had little opportunity, aptitude or appetite for classics. Step into the cage, therefore, and come down to another underexplored realm, where reading rooms, translations, cheap books, magazines, performance and superhuman effort reign supreme. The characters we meet in this under-realm are neither timid, nor do they hold back, rather they seek out engagements with antiquity irrespective of whether or not they are considered to be excluded from so doing. There is no clean division between so-called popular and elite culture; they operate in turbulent synthesis.

As Rachel Falconer has recently identified, the transformative journey through Hell is a rich and recurrent commonplace in post-war Western narrative.¹² Classicists are, of course, familiar with the katabatic tradition in Greek and Roman literature and myth, but are likely less familiar with the fact that this tradition resonated particularly strongly with the mineworker. After all, each day for the miner contained a descent to another realm, and although the repetitive work and camaraderie would create a sense of familiarity, it has always been well understood that life underground leaves its mark, and that even nowadays the return to the surface cannot be taken for granted.¹³ Employment of the commonplace does not, of course, necessarily indicate direct influence from a classical source, but the frequency of its fusion with other classical imagery (not always of a katabatic nature) does suggest that the miners’ *katabasis* is at least imbued with a classical flavour.

Sid Chaplin’s inner Hades

One literary miner who dreamt of escaping his underground life was Sid Chaplin (1916–86). Before Chaplin made a name for himself as a versatile professional writer, he worked as a colliery blacksmith and later as an underground belt-fitter.¹⁴ He was an avid self-educator, attending the ‘pit university’ of the Spennymoor Settlement, where he attended Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) courses.¹⁵ In 1939 he won a scholarship to Fircroft Working Men’s College, in Selly Oak, Birmingham to study economics and political theory. After a year or so of struggling to meet the academic requirements, the onset of war sent him back to Durham and the pit life he thought he had escaped. Chaplin’s papers contain the manuscript poems of a coalman in his early twenties dreaming of a literary life.¹⁶ Most are typewritten and a number have critical comments and metrical notation scribbled over and around the text, including the handwriting of his quondam literary mentor, the Spennymoor Settlement warden Bill Farrell.

Among pages with titles such as ‘Poems of an Unprivileged Poet’ and ‘Where Gorki Died’ can be found the poem ‘Miner’, which sees the young pitman poet relate his own experience below ground to that of the suffering titan god Atlas:

I am the inner Atlas of this spinning globe.
At the dark centre of your green circumference
I crouch, the crawling wonder of my darker world,
The sweating surgeon of the strata depths,
The probing, blasting hero of my diamond doom.

In this poem, which casts its miner protagonist at once as a doomed hero, sweating surgeon and inner Atlas, Chaplin sets up the classic distinction between *his* painful ‘darker world’ and the ‘green circumference’, between the isolated and isolating world of work and the world of leisure, between ‘my’ world and ‘your’ world. The original and highly evocative image of the ‘inner Atlas’ shows an understanding that it is through his effort as a miner that ‘our’ (?) green and spinning globe is sustained. It is a dense poem with a protean, collage-style imagery that resists a clear central image, but if we are left with one image it is surely the (ultimately visually elusive) one of the ‘inner Atlas’, who while being at the centre of the world has its weight on his shoulders.

Another of Chaplin’s poems is ‘Miners at Work (After the Drawings by Henry Moore)’:

Dim shapes swathed in darkness,
In darkness swathed in mystery.
Elements:
Darkness, coal, the living flesh

Crouching, crawling, creeping:
The straining of unseen muscles
Against unknown weight.

Unreal men in their inner Hades,
 But look, ah!
See the pinpoint glowing of eyes,
The eyes of the dead who live
And in their life attain the mastery
Of blood and sweat.
Tears are for widows.

This straining flesh, this cornerstone
Of creature comfort;
Culture,
Cities of men,
Commonwealth to be.

This is the way to mastery,
Hewn through the planet's bones
To the ultimate shining lode.

The message of eyes in the dark?
(Cat's eyes that curve to the end of light)
Cauldron within
Says the smouldering spark.

This poem explicitly views the unseen 'straining flesh' of dehumanized forms toiling in the darkness as 'the cornerstone of creature comfort;/ Culture,/Cities of men, Commonwealth to be'. It is written from the perspective of one of those 'dead who live', one of the 'unreal men in their inner Hades' and is justifiably critical of the stark inequalities of 1930s Britain, inequalities that have the 'real' people on the surface enjoying the fruits of his and his fellow workers' exhausting labour.

Chaplin's use of the classical colouring of 'Atlas' and 'Hades' cast his day's labour in the cultural and emotional context he felt necessary to adequately describe to his surface-dwelling readers the grimness of his underworld. It is the cruel punishment and eternal labour of Atlas, and the dark, inescapable underworld home of the Grecian dead that best suited the young artist's purpose. The epithet 'inner' that qualifies both Atlas and Hades emphasizes the unjustly disproportionate personal burden laid on the individual subterranean worker. The colliers' world painted by Chaplin in these two poems is not just dark, claustrophobic and uncomfortable, but also desperately lonely. There is no other human presence with whom the 'unknown weight' can be

shared, no camaraderie and not a hint of religion or even external mythology in which to take comfort. The absence of religion may surprise, given that Chaplin was a Methodist lay preacher from 1938 to 1948. While it is common in this turbulent period for political, religious, ethnic and social loyalties to be divided, or plural, the presence of religion would have been an awkward fit with the classical, Marxist aesthetic and framework otherwise employed.

After John Lehmann published Chaplin's work in Penguin's 'New Writing' series in 1941, the reluctant miner's star steadily rose, and he became an established author, journalist and arts worker – for which service he was awarded an OBE in 1977. Chaplin's example is an important reminder that we ought not always consider self-education and self-improvement to be unidirectional, that is, away from one's origins. Although Chaplin felt unsuited to the labour environment into which he was born, his personal aspiration was not, it appears, driven simply by a desire to escape his roots, but to use his hard-won cultural experience and classical knowledge to better represent the lives of his fellows in the stories that he told. Higher education may, for Chaplin, have been part of the route to success, but he used it not to sever ties with his ordinary social group, but to better communicate both its struggle and cultural richness to the world above.



Figure 10.1 ‘Past Durham cathedral, with its tall towers, Joe Guy makes his way to the University’. Courtesy of Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections (UND_DB15_IB_7). Reproduced, with cited caption, in *COAL* magazine 5 (January 1952): 10.

Joe Guy

In the 1940s Joe Guy ([Figure 10.1](#)) worked full time down the mine at Sacriston Colliery, County Durham as a ‘datal worker’, that is, a miner on a standard wage without bonuses. He was active in local government, serving as compensation secretary, and a member of the Parish Council. For one who occupied such a central position in his community, it is telling that the only reason we now know about Joe

Guy at all is that in 1952 he won a place on a course set up by the National Union of Mineworkers and Durham Colleges' Board of Extramural Studies. This achievement was subsequently recorded in *COAL* magazine, the PR organ of the National Coal Board.¹⁷

Joe Guy – so the story ran – was 'a typical Durham miner' in all ways apart from one 'small accomplishment'. 'He has taught himself to read Greek and is a regular contributor to a theological magazine'.¹⁸ The course held at Durham University was designed to prepare promising workers for management and Trade Union leadership positions. Unlike Hardy's Jude Fawley, therefore, Joe Guy was welcomed (albeit as part of a funded extension programme) within the high walls of academic study and, in spite of numerous logistical, social and economic barriers, achieved a higher level of education and actively engaged in current academic discourse.

As the *COAL* feature suggests, the eccentric way Joe Guy spent his leisure time made him somewhat untypical, and – in terms of both physical and mental stamina and intellectual capacity – he was no doubt an exceptional individual. However untypical, his example was no anomaly. This biographical fragment provides evidence (where evidence is scarce) for clusters of workers – constituting a significant minority – who were both willing and able to negotiate the hard-going routes to classical and academic attainment in spite of the meagre opportunities afforded them by their social position. Joe Guy was, in fact, following a long tradition of self-educating men and (occasionally) women in mining communities, who – as the term suggests – sought out learning via routes outside of formal educational provision. It is, after all, no mean feat to teach oneself Greek.

Even though it is probable that he learned Greek to prepare himself for entering into theological debate rather than reading Homer, Joe Guy's example raises a fundamental question. As historians – especially but not exclusively of literature – we are accustomed to dealing with exceptional individuals (whether or not this 'exceptional' label is justified, and how and by whom it is applied, is of course, another matter). Indeed, using the literary remains of extraordinary individuals to identify and draw out general shifts in ways of seeing the world is such common practice that it is barely even noteworthy, despite those extraordinary individuals experiencing life in very different ways to the majority. Traditional scholarly practice has marginalized the ordinary individual to such an extent that *their* lives – and (quite bizarrely) not those of the often highly eccentric poets, politicians, scholars and makers of all kinds of art – have become extraordinary. Significant scholarly progress has been made to redress this balance, and twenty-first-century digital research techniques will certainly speed things up.¹⁹

Of course, the paucity and often low aesthetic appeal of the written records from the lower classes is partially responsible for the skewed historical record. But it is essential that we bring these underrepresented experiences into our conception of the past. Their combined contribution to broader cultural dynamics is of enormous significance. Mass consumption (since the Industrial Revolution) has driven the supply of cultural products, as it does other products, and the nexus of contemporary taste is hugely affected by the direction of travel of the mainstream. It is also important to remember that the examples set by those autodidacts may provide important inspiration for members of all marginalized constituencies, whose struggle against the social current can appear insurmountable.

Barbara Taylor

Following the Mining Act of 1920, the mining industry of Great Britain supported ‘an organised system of welfare activities in the interest of mine workers and mining communities, through a fund raised by a statutory levy on the output of the mines’. Section 20 of the Act imposed a tax of one penny on each tonne of coal mined in Britain, specifically to create a miners’ welfare fund to be used ‘for such purposes connected with the social well-being, recreation, and conditions of workers in or about coal mines, and with mining education and research as the Government, through designated agencies, should determine’.[20](#)



Figure 10.2 Barbara Taylor in *COAL* magazine (13 January 1960): 6. Courtesy of the National Coal Mining Museum for England.

One such agency was the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO), which awarded a scholarship in 1959 to a certain Barbara Taylor (Figure 10.2), the ‘daughter of a miner at Yorkshire’s Darfield Main’ who wanted to train as a teacher. This scholarship allowed her to read ‘Latin at London University’.²¹ This information was gleaned, like that about Joe Guy, from *COAL* magazine, but for Taylor we have even less information than for Guy.²² You will find no entry for Joe Guy, or Barbara Taylor in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB). The ‘ordinariness’ of their lives has meant that their experiences, like those of countless others, have been absent from both the historical record and wider popular consciousness. It is a

simple point, not a pejorative one (the *ODNB* is not a census), but one that quickly demonstrates how traditional tools of research are limited in their application to working-class subjects.

At first glance Joe Guy's and Barbara Taylor's interactions with the classical languages appear exceptional, anomalous even. They come to us as biographical fragments ostensibly 'out of the blue'. Further investigation, however, of the communities in which Guy and Taylor lived, the institutions supporting their efforts, and the educational routes they travelled, reveal clusters of classical activity. Largely perhaps due to the additional difficulty in tracking lesser-known women, because of changes in surname, the clusters around Guy are marginally more visible, as yet, than those around Taylor.

University extension in Durham

When in 1952 Joe Guy left his pit village and headed to a Saturday class on Palace Green, Durham, so did another 24 miners from different pit villages. The class was called 'The Working of Democracy in Britain' and it was delivered by Peter Kaim-Caudle (1916–2010), who would later become Professor of Social Policy at the University of Durham. Guy's course was organized jointly by the Durham Area of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Durham Colleges Board of Extra-Mural Studies, drawing students from collieries in all parts of Durham. *COAL* magazine tells us that the students' average age was thirty and that 'some have attended NCLC [National Council of Labour Colleges] and WEA courses, but the majority have little or no adult educational experience'.²³

Although – as the programme's archived prospectuses show – most Political Sciences courses began with Plato, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that this particular extra-mural class in Durham made any reference to the classical world. From their tentative beginnings, however, in 1886, the University Extension Lectures in Durham often did include classical subject matter. The lecture series aimed 'to bring some of the benefits of University teaching within the reach of persons, of either sex and every class, who have been unable to join the University as Matriculated Students'. Alongside a wide range of subjects in the prospectus courses on Roman poetry, Ancient Drama, Ancient History and Greek Philosophy were offered.²⁴ As we dig deeper we realize both that social pressures barred the majority of mineworkers and their families from further study and that Joe Guy's experience was by no means a one-off.

In 1911, Durham University joined forces with the WEA 'to foster and supervise tutorial classes in the area'. In 1916 the extra-mural teaching was directed by Rev. E. G. Pace, for whom 'one major

ambition ... [was] to interest more pitmen in Extra-mural work'. His period in charge was successful partly because he was sensitive to 'suspicion both from University and the Miners' side' which he thought 'probably goes back a long way'.²⁵ He was also clearly a stickler for figures, and demanded detailed and reflective reports from tutors on class progress. In 1924, 45 per cent of students in the tutorial classes were manual labourers and 33 per cent colliers. These tutorials were conducted in an astonishing number of the mining communities surrounding the city of Durham. The year 1934 saw the presentation of a wonderful WEA/University Tutorial Class in the Council School, Easington Colliery, entitled 'Utopias'. Before any mention of Thomas More, the tutor, Ralph Todd MA, ran three classes on ancient Athens and Plato's *Republic*.

Ever popular were classes that incorporated local Roman history and provided abundant opportunity for day trips to nearby Corbridge and Housesteads, where lecturers in raincoats could point at (and declaim earnestly from) bits of Hadrian's Wall, before admiring crowds of students. [Figures 10.3](#) and [10.4](#) detail such practices and feature John P. Gillam and Walter Taylor, respectively. In the late 1940s Gillam was a lecturer in Archaeology at King's College, Newcastle, at which time he offered tours of sections of Hadrian's Wall. In the 1950s Walter Taylor served as staff tutor for extra-mural studies for Durham's Colleges. His late-1940s *Social History* course covered the Roman Occupation of Durham County, and his evening classes (1957–8), entitled *Archaeology and History of Roman Britain*, were well attended at Billingham Technical College.²⁶



Figure 10.3 J. P. Gillam. Courtesy of Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections (UND_DB15_IB_58).



Figure 10.4 Walter Taylor. Courtesy of Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections (UND_DB15_IB_70).

In 1947 Harold Boyden took Pace's place as head of extra-mural studies at Durham. He collaborated successfully with local media and local trade unions to drum up even greater participation from the harder-to-reach communities of coal and steelworkers. It was under his leadership that Joe Guy found the funding and opportunity to continue his education at the university. In 1955 Boyden explained to a reporter: 'We are pleased that more working class people – many of them miners and steelworkers – are taking advantage of the courses.' He continued: 'In a manner of speaking, there are miners and steel workers who will take a course in Elizabethan literature or the history of the Near East virtually "at the drop of a hat"'.²⁷ By looking at the extra-mural syllabuses of the time it is clear that 'Elizabethan literature' and 'the history of the Near East' could just have easily been 'Greek philosophy' and 'the history of the Roman Empire'.

Wanlockhead

Before and during the Industrial Revolution, British working-class self-educators had to make do without the WEA, NCLC or University extra-mural programmes. Mechanics' Institutes and other institutions of the kind began to emerge from the 1820s onwards on the initiative of the new captains of industry. Before the Industrial Revolution, during the eighteenth century, if autodidacts received any support at all in their

pursuit of knowledge, it usually came through the haphazard system of philanthropy, or the sense of social responsibility of wealthy landowners. Increasingly – and these two examples are not mutually exclusive – more horizontalist and (as it happens) frequently non-conformist religious organizations also provided support for education, both formally and informally. An example of where the philanthropic model worked well can be found in the villages of Wanlockhead and Leadmills in the notoriously grey glen of the Lowther Hills in Dumfries and Galloway.

This remarkable, isolated incidence of miner classics has come to light because on 19 August 1803 Dorothy Wordsworth visited the Lowther Hills. As they walked up the vale she, her brother William and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge encountered three young boys. ‘One’, she noted in her *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland in 1803*, ‘carried a fishing-rod, and the hats of all were braided with honeysuckles; they ran after one another as wanton as the wind.’ Soon the three

were joined by some half-dozen of their companions, all without shoes and stockings. They told us they lived at Wanlockhead, the village above, pointing to the top of the hill; they went to school and learned Latin, Virgil, and some of them Greek, Homer, but when Coleridge began to inquire further, off they ran, poor things! I suppose afraid of being examined.²⁸

These children were from an extremely isolated lead-mining community and lived in what is to this day the highest village in Scotland. How was there such a concentration of classical learning in this remote part of the country? Part of the credit must be given to a particularly benevolent landlord, Henry Scott, the third Duke of Buccleuch and fifth Duke of Queensberry (born in 1746), who supported the miners in their endeavour to establish and run a lending library in the village. But also it ought to be noted that a good deal of the self-educating spirit is likely to have been brought to Wanlockhead by the Quakers, who ran the mines before the Duke’s tenure. By 1750, for example, there was already a thriving school in the village, and by the time of the Wordsworths’ visit it had gained a reputation for its excellent education. For four decades after Dorothy Wordsworth came to Wanlockhead, the Minister of Wanlockhead Free Church, the Rev. Thomas Hastings, educated many working-class boys, who went on to transcend their class origins to become lawyers, physicians, teachers, poets and ministers.²⁹

From November 1756, thirty-two of the adult villagers of Wanlockhead also had access to their Miners’ Library, the second oldest subscription library in Europe – after the one just down the

road in Leadhills. Originally called ‘The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead’, it eventually housed more than three thousand volumes. Membership was not cheap, but just about affordable for a miner: the annual subscription was two to four shillings, and a miner earned nine or ten shillings a week. The library rules were very strict. Only one membership was granted per household, access to the library was granted just once a month when a single book could be exchanged and damage or loss of a book led to a potentially crippling fine, of double the value of the book. The collection of books became so large that it had to be rehoused in 1851 to a purpose-built library, which is now a feature of Wanlockhead’s Museum of Leadmining. There are numerous religious texts and volumes of self-improvement literature (including Samuel Smiles); journals and magazines from *Chambers’ Edinburgh Magazine*, the *Penny Magazine* and Cassell’s *Popular Educator* to the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* and the London literary journal the *Athenaeum*. Novels too abound – Scott, Dickens, Fielding, Kingsley and Thackeray; there are also books on foreign travel, adventure stories, scholarly treatises on agriculture, science and, of course, mining.³⁰

There are, interestingly, no classical texts in the original languages in the library. These must have been the stuff of the schoolhouse. In translation, however, were available the works of Plato, Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics*; there are two volumes of Josephus. Homer’s *Odyssey* was accessible through John Hawkesworth’s translation of François Fénelon’s *Adventures of Telemachus*. The Duke of Buccleuch donated a good number of titles over the years, which intriguingly included a handsomely bound Ainsworth’s *Latin Dictionary*, which would have come in handy when reading some of the more learned literary journals (though I’m not sure if I’d spend my one book a month quota on it).

What we have in the Wanlockhead Miners’ Library is a record of the reading habits of a well-educated working-class rural community that clearly revelled in the increased availability of improving literature during the nineteenth century. It shows that ancient Greek and Roman stories, if not the unmediated texts themselves, were a part – if only a humbly small part – of that improvement movement. There was clearly a rich and diverse engagement among working-class communities with classical culture, outside of the traditional educational routes, which have tended in the past to dominate the discourses of historical research.

While philanthropic landowners and religious organizations provided the chief routes to working-class learning in Britain before and during the Industrial Revolution, the struggles for social reform that took place through the nineteenth century brought about new

and different avenues for education. These were increasingly driven by the politically motivated enterprises of an increasingly unionized workforce – or the Labour Movement.³¹ Among them were such establishments and enterprises as the WEA, the NCLC, the Settlement Movement and the University Extension Movement. Philanthropic ventures continued in the shape of Mechanics' Institutes, often funded by industrialists, who considered that an educated workforce would be a more efficient workforce. As we have seen in the case of County Durham, there was also significant cross-pollination and dialogue between these institutions and initiatives.

Ernest Rhys

Sometimes all it took was the initiative of a small group, or an individual, within a community to set up a reading group, or begin a library. The evidence of such enterprises is scarce because they were often short-lived, lasting as long as the interest and energy of those individuals who began them. Ernest Rhys (1859–1946), the socialist poet and man of letters, was one such individual. He began his professional life as a mining engineer, or 'coal viewer' and is the unsung hero behind Joseph Malaby Dent's hugely influential Everyman Library. As founding editor of the Everyman Library's series (est. 1906), Rhys was chiefly responsible for early-twentieth-century Britain reading good English translations of many of the most famous works of world literature, including the Greek and Roman classics. Before he became one of the most productive 'beetles' (as he called them) of the British Library, at the age of twenty, Rhys established the 'Winter Nights Club' in his coal village of Langley. Driven by the desire to do something to remedy 'the plight of the pitmen who had precious few resources of amusement after their day's work', he turned a derelict miner's cottage into a clubhouse and library. He recalled years later that he was so proud of his achievement that he 'even drew up a catalogue of the books I meant the pitmen to read, and you may laugh to hear that Plato's *Republic* was one of them'.³²

But why should we laugh? Presumably because the lazy narrative of working-class disinterest in perceived 'high culture' was so pervasive, that it even survives in the writing of a man who did so much to challenge it. Rhys learned early on in life both that there were many working men, especially miners, with a powerful thirst for knowledge and that there was a deeply ingrained resistance to this notion. When he first took his idea of the miners' reading room to his colleagues at the coal pit in Langley Park, Co. Durham, he tells of how he was met with derisive snorts of contempt: 'A libery [*sic*]), begod! What do they want with books? Papers now, with the betting news, and a billiard

table, but books!’³³ (Compare Sassoon’s port-flushed dons.) These words belonged to a fellow coal viewer named Tolliday, who was older, larger and considerably more gnarled than the young Rhys, and whose dismay at the idea of a library Rhys recollected in his autobiographical *Wales England Wed* (1940). Tolliday was clearly of the school that considered workers to be interested only in drinking and gambling. To say that both modes of diversion were rife among mining communities across Britain in the nineteenth century would be an understatement, but this was largely because there was often little else to do – hence Rhys’s plan.

Another colleague, however, Tom Hepburn, the chief viewer, or ‘overman’ at Langley Park colliery, warmed to Rhys’s idea. Hepburn was, Rhys tells us, ‘a good Methodist, and hated the public house like the devil, and here [the reading room] was a good rival’. Together Rhys and Hepburn ‘managed to get round our chief and the directors of the colliery’.³⁴ It is no coincidence that it took the utopian vision of a young literary enthusiast and socialist, and the support of a Methodist foreman bent on Temperance, to push through such a radical idea. Political and religious groups, often with considerable overlap, helped to foment the spirit of reform which would eventually bring about positive changes to the lives – in- and outside the workplace – of British workers.

The pitmen of Langley Park, who attended Rhys’s ‘Winter Nights Club’, used to meet to discuss politics and philosophy, from Plato to Ruskin. The Saturday night reading circle, which Rhys himself described as ‘that queer school of philosophy’, attracted a dozen students, mostly under twenty years old. They read Henry George’s treatise *Progress and Poverty* (1879) and Ruskin’s *Unto This Last* (1860). Their progressiveness knew some limits, however, when they refused entrance to two young schoolmistresses. One of the club’s members complained that they would not be able to read Burns and Shakespeare without causing the women to blush, then added, with lower levels of altruism, ‘We’ll be having a dance class next!’³⁵

In his publishing career, Rhys was obsessed with the notion of capturing ‘the Big Public’ and reaching 1,000 books in the Everyman’s Library series, a democratizing literary ambition and achievement perhaps matched only by Maxim Gorky’s Всемирная Литература (World Literature) publishing project of the early Soviet Union. He summed up his attitude to what world literature, including the classics, could do in the world when he wrote:

If only Everyman had been the guide of a New Europe in that year of grace, there need have been no war in 1939. Such volumes as Plato’s *Republic* (and *Symposium*) ... [and] Mommsen’s

History of Rome ... provide a testament of civil liberty, political wisdom, and a mental gymnastic, which had he been put through 'a course of them' would have prevented the author of *Mein Kampf* from writing that book.³⁶

Jack Lawson

Just 16 miles northeast from Langley's all-male reading group, and around 30 years forward in time, the Durham collier Jack Lawson (1881–1965) lived in the pit village of Bolden. Lawson, who was later to become Financial Secretary to the War Office in the first Labour government, began his working life at the age of twelve as what he would later call a 'two-legged mule of industry'.³⁷ Lawson's example usefully confounds the distinction between those working men who gambled, and those who took to books. After he lost his money in the games, he would skulk back to his house and lose himself in his steadily growing library, shelved in orange crates. He spent his penniless weekends 'in following the Goths over Europe, right into old Rome, or marching with Attila's "Huns"'.³⁸ His father worried for his mental health.

Lawson was a glutton for history, and this is what formed the major part of his orange-crate library. Among his history books was the ever-popular Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. But he was certainly not reading Gibbon at the coalface. What *did* happen actually down the mineshaft was an especially formative discussion with his fellow collier, the Welshman Jack Woodward, which Lawson reported in his memoirs:

I can see Woodward now ... I can see the wraith-like figure of him as he talked books. The shovel squealed against the hard stone floor, then leaped over the tub its burden of coal, coming back for more almost before it had started ... The pick was biting the coal as though driven by a machine. Thus we worked and talked, swallowing our peck of dust every minute ... I timidly turned the subject to Ruskin, who was just at that time receiving my homage. His plea for art, education, and a decent life for the toiler aroused mutual enthusiasm in us.³⁹

No classics, admittedly, but this evidence of 'talking books' down at the coalface suggests that classics down the mineshaft was both possible and indeed probable, especially when we consider – as evidenced by catalogues of miners' libraries – that many of the books read by such men were related to the classical world.

Before long Lawson was embarking on an undergraduate course at

Ruskin College, and was soon enjoying the newly won privilege of Ruskin students of attending Oxford University lectures, finally benefitting from the same educational practice as the children of the wealthy power-holders. Lawson declined postgraduate education, in spite of every encouragement. He preferred to return to the pit, from where he would begin his successful political career.

In case we should think of Lawson as an anomaly (he was clearly exceptional) we ought to note the experiences of those other men with whom he talked books in Bolden. Not only does Lawson mention in his autobiography the wise Jack Woodward, but also an unnamed man, whose wife taught him to read in his thirties and who – we are told – would wait for Lawson so that they could walk home from the pit together and discuss his reading. This long-illiterate collier spoke memorably to Lawson about his passionate appreciation of Nietzsche. Lawson wrote admiringly: ‘This man read the New Testament in Greek and oratorios were as easy to him as the latest song is to the man in the street.’⁴⁰ Again, like Joe Guy, the Greek mentioned is biblical rather than classical, but it is unlikely that so avid a reader was not at times tempted to read a line or two of Plato or Homer. The key is that he could. A man who could not even read English until his thirties had the opportunity, desire and ability to become a fluent reader of New Testament Greek. (Remember, once again, Sassoon’s port-flushed dons.)

Pitmen painters of Ashington

Around 20 miles north of Bolden Colliery lies the coal town of Ashington, Northumberland. Although we still find no evidence of *discussion* of classical culture down the pit in Ashington, we do discover that it was not unknown for miners to take their classical reading material down with them in the cage.⁴¹ Since the formation in 1898 of the Ashington Debating and Literary Improvement Society, classical Greek and Roman authors were included on the reading list and discussed at its regular meetings. Harold Laski, soon to be appointed professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics and co-founder of the influential Left Book Club, visited their group in September 1924, and returned the same time the following year.

After his second visit he wrote to his friend the American jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes:

I gave them four lectures, but I learned more from them than I could ever teach. It was sometimes grim talk, for there are hard times ahead for the mining community in England. But, in

general, it was of books and men ... There was one ... who had learned Greek in order to read Homer in the original ... These twelve every Friday for thirty-six years have met to read and discuss a book. They argue grimly with text and counter-text and you have to know your piece to get by them. They were saddened, while I was there, by the death of a miner who was found killed by a fall of coal; in his coat was found a translation of Thucydides with the page turned down at the Periclean speech.

This is a remarkable piece of evidence for classics down the mineshaft. Its mediation through a letter exchange between two men of prominent social standing is typically precarious. Our knowledge of it relies upon the extraordinary circumstance of Laski, a committed socialist (he was an executive member of the Fabian Society at the time), travelling from London to give a series of lectures to the miners' reading group. Had it not been for those visits, we would never have known of the classical reading of the Ashington pitmen.

In the political crucible of the 1930s – as Laski moved from Fabianism to Marxism – the colliery community at Ashington also saw the rise of a tradition of painting, facilitated by Robert Lyon, then master of painting at Armstrong College, Newcastle. The unlikely voyage of a group of colliers to artistic discovery, and a certain amount of fame, has been well documented by William Feather in his book *The Pitmen Painters* (first published in 1988), which in turn inspired Lee Hall's play by the same name. It began with the formation of an art appreciation group. When Lyon arrived in Ashington under the auspices of the WEA, he began to lecture the class as he would his undergraduate students. He showed them a series of lantern slides of old masters, but he quickly learned – or more likely was taught – that this was not the way to go about teaching this tightly knit group of adults, who had their own ideas about what they wanted from the class. Oliver Kilbourne, a founding member of the group and one of the most acclaimed painters among them, spoke of how the old black and white pictures Lyon showed them in those first sessions were 'mainly of Renaissance paintings and either religious or mythological subjects. As we didn't know the Greek myths *then* we were rather baffled and didn't really get anywhere with this.'⁴²

Lyon changed tactics: he embarked on a purely practical style of teaching, encouraging the pitmen to learn by doing. It did not take long for the group to start painting scenes of life in the pit village. One of the first pieces of work, however, produced by the group was a linocut by Harry Wilson ([Figure 10.5](#)) of a cloth-capped, stern-faced and muscular miner chained to a large cog, presumably representing

the pithead winding gear. Although the majority of accounts of the pitmen painters have tended to play down the political resonances of the group's work, Wilson's image clearly engages with the Marxian trope of the exploited labourer chained to the means of production. Their art returns, above all, to scenes of daily life from the pit village, and representations of work down the mine: revealing the unseen world that they inhabit, in an urgently political gesture.



Figure 10.5 Image by Harry Wilson (linocut c. 1934). Courtesy of William Feaver.

Even though these pitmen painters gave the classical tradition the cold shoulder, they still encountered classical culture at every turn in their artistic development. The *then* of Kilbourne's dismissal of Lyon's lantern slides ('we did not *then* know the Greek myths') is indicative of the fact that through their exposure to the art world, which included educational trips to columned London galleries, meetings with formally trained artists, the study of artistic techniques from books and practical art classes, for example, in King's College, Newcastle, they did before long become familiar with the Greek myths. One studio in King's College, where they worked ([Figure 10.6](#)), was lined with sections of the Parthenon Frieze: their passion for art literally surrounded them with classical culture. Whether they liked it or not, this cultural presence seeped into their lives and opened a window onto another world, perhaps Chaplin's 'green circumference'.



Figure 10.6 Art class in King's College, Newcastle. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Ashington Group.

If Plato lived in Spennymoor

In 1930, straight from the University Settlement Movement headquarters at Toynbee Hall, Bill Farrell arrived in Spennymoor in County Durham.⁴³ He saw that the unemployed miners needed encouragement (in his words) 'to think of other things and other spheres of possible work besides the defunct or moribund mine'.⁴⁴ At its peak, the town had boasted the largest ironworking mill in Europe; in the 1920s and '30s it was a boomtown gone bust.

Farrell's Settlement, with the backing of the Pilgrim Trust, set out 'to encourage tolerant neighbourliness and voluntary service, and give members opportunities for increasing their knowledge, widening their interests, and cultivating their creative powers in a friendly atmosphere'.⁴⁵ What it achieved was perhaps even more important. As the reporter-activist Arnold Hadwin put it: 'The Settlement gave an impoverished community the will and means to fight back against the failings of the State, with assurance and dignity.'⁴⁶ In January to March 1936 the Spennymoor Settlement, established in a disused shop on the high street, was the scene of an encounter with Plato by employed and unemployed Spennymoor inhabitants alike. Farrell encouraged local people to think of the 'Pitman's Academy' as their university. The activities were provided for them at almost no cost. One came in the form of a BBC listening group. Each Tuesday evening at 7.30 pm the men would gather around the radio and listen to two

young Oxford fellows ‘examine modern society in the light of Plato’s teaching’. It was part of a series of eleven BBC broadcasts of what was essentially an adult educational course entitled ‘If Plato Lived Again’.

The two young philosophers were Dick [R.H.S.] Crossman and Charles Morris. Crossman (1907–74) the lead writer of the programme, was – at the time – a fellow of New College, Oxford, writing his first book entitled *Plato Today* (1937) and wowing undergraduates with his ‘special gift for the toughest sort of dialectic’.⁴⁷ He became a Labour MP in 1945 and won fame posthumously as a political diarist. Morris (1898–1990) was fellow and tutor of philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, and later became a knighted university administrator.⁴⁸

Not all of the Settlement members were miners, but every one of them lived in the extreme deprivation of a failing Durham coal town during the Depression. Programmes like ‘If Plato Lived Again’ were a valuable point of access for individuals and groups such as the Spennymoor one, nationwide. One of the great strengths of the *If Plato Lived Again* series was the balance of ancient and modern: the grounding of Platonic philosophy in the familiar world of the present. In the sixth talk, *Who Can Save the World?* – following a lucid summary of Plato’s plan for the salvation of the world – Charles Morris took Crossman to task for appearing to have too fully absorbed his Athenian teacher’s doctrine.⁴⁹ In an entertaining Socratic exchange, when the Christian Socialist Morris suggests that ‘Nobody can really regenerate the social life of a people except the people themselves’, Crossman replies:

Yes, but isn’t it just the great political leaders, like Cromwell, or for the matter of that Hitler, who do get under people’s skins and make them do things they could not possibly do otherwise? I can see you haven’t heard Hitler speak! [*clearly responding to enthusiastic objection from Morris in the studio*] You may not like it, but he does get at his hearers and make them do things.⁵⁰

It was perhaps Crossman’s gift for ‘upping the ante’ that barred him from Attlee’s front bench. Indeed, the BBC became increasingly wary of the ways he stretched the bounds of the Corporation’s alleged but often contested political impartiality.

In 1936, Crossman was not new to BBC broadcasting, nor was he new to making comparisons between classical Greece and German fascism.⁵¹ In 1934, Crossman’s BBC radio debut ‘Germany: The Inner Conflict’ was broadcast, where he sought to outline the appeal of National Socialism to Germans. As Stephen Hodgkinson has discussed, Crossman created in these broadcasts an analogy between ancient Sparta and Nazism, mediated by personal accounts of Germans and

the writings of Richard Walther Darré, the Reich Minister of Agriculture, who looked back admiringly to an apparently 'agrarian peasant Sparta'.⁵²

Through the prism of Plato's philosophy, contemporary events and dilemmas were presented in an accessible, relevant and provocative way. Fears relating to the rise of fascism abroad (and at home) swim beneath and, from time to time, leap clear from the surface of this philosophical series. A little further submerged, but still very much discernible, lurks the spectre of communism, which – with the apparent success of the young Soviet Union and its inclusive and united 'Popular Front' opposition to fascism – did not inspire fear in many of those impoverished self-educating workers, those unforgettable forgotten men sitting around the radio in Spennymoor learning about international relations through Plato, while the steelworkers and shipbuilders of Jarrow planned their historic march on the capital.⁵³

This chapter has captured glimpses of an elusive miner's classics, often fragmentary accidents of history, disturbances in the surface. It has attempted to contextualize these disturbances and illuminate what lies beneath, assessing the extent of their anomalous appearance. It has directed some light towards the intellectual and cultural lives of those usually perceived to have gone without either. There are many more archives to explore, particularly in the Welsh miners' libraries, and more work to be done on the katabatic tradition in miners' art.

It is difficult to make general observations, let alone conclusions, when the subject is still so fragmentarily represented and the scope, in terms of both time and place, so wide. What is clear is that there was considerable engagement with classical culture where numerous factors conspire to lead us to believe that there would be none. Why were the miners attracted to the classical? The answer, of course, was different for each individual, and we only have a few case studies available. We have come across miners attracted to the classical languages for religious (and non-classical) reasons, that is, to read the New Testament in Greek and enjoy the Latin of the oratorio. Interest in the history under their feet drew many to explore Roman Britain and classical material culture. We have witnessed classical knowledge gained more or less as a by-product of Further Educational courses, and the creative practice and study of art. Reading of classical texts (as 'world literature') has been both undertaken and encouraged as a horizon-expanding preventative against the kinds of narrow-mindedness that result in provincialism and fascism. The attraction of the classical, in this sense, is driven by a humanistic impulse to expand our horizons beyond our own limited experience, and in so doing increase tolerance and the capacity to cope with new social

challenges. And finally – to end where we began – we have journeyed downwards with the mineworkers who have reached for the titanic suffering from classical myth to attempt to communicate in recognizable terms the harsh and confined lived experience of the subterranean, to those who dwell in the world above.

CHAPTER 11

EXTREME CLASSICISMS

JORGE LUIS BORGES

Laura Jansen

What happens when models of classicism are exported beyond the boundaries of what is traditionally termed the ‘West’ and into modern peripheral cultures such as those of twentieth-century Argentina? This chapter will consider this question in the oeuvre of Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges (Buenos Aires, 1899–Geneva, 1986), one of the most extraordinary, indeed eccentric, literary minds of his era. In considering Borges’s brand of classicism, however, my aim will not be to stress the marginal distance of his classical voice as it emerges in an essay written by and large for an audience in the Anglophone world. Nor is my intention to appeal to Argentina’s geographical – and often cultural – distance from the heart of Europe, where Graeco-Roman antiquity has long functioned as the established origin of Western civilization and as such the common ground of Europe, its colonies and the project of humanism, to build my case. Rather, I would like to draw attention to the *extreme* quality of Borges’s classical vision, a vision that discloses the classics in forms rarely explored before.

Borges proposes a radical approach to recalling the Graeco-Roman past. He is not interested in rejecting Western European readings of antiquity (in fact, part of his classicism builds on these readings) in order to make a claim on the rightful place of the classical tradition in Argentina and South America. His ambitions are instead more philosophical. In his appeal to the Graeco-Roman past, what intrigues Borges are the stances that we adopt to experience and, above all, the way we reimagine that past as it reveals itself errantly, unpredictably and successively in space and time before us. Examples of this mode of encountering the classics abound in Borges’s writings, and amount to pioneering re-readings of the Western canon in twentieth-century world literature.¹ Borges presents us with intriguing classical revisions. These point to experimental ways of reinvigorating our

cultural memory and re-plotting the temporal mechanisms with which Western literature and thought order their history, as well as rethinking the dialogue between antiquity and modernity and centre and periphery. As we shall see in the sections that follow, the interplay of distance and closeness to the classical object is crucial to the radical forms of Borges's classicism. Here, the classics emerge at the crossroads of two cultures of the West, while increasingly projecting a globalizing –yet intensely *centreless* – image of Greece, Rome and the classical tradition in the landscape of the modernist imagination.

A rumour of Homer

One way to begin thinking about these issues is to consider Borges's presentation of the distant past as a rumour. Take, for instance, the manner in which the Argentine author envisages an afterlife for Homer in 'The Maker' (1960),² as the ancient (pre-)classical³ Greek poet who we call 'Homer' forgets the memory of his own authorship and his canonicity dissipates in the course of time. This short fiction functions as a biographical riddle for the reader. The narrator relates the life experiences and recollections of a man whose name is never revealed. We only know from the title that he is a, or, more precisely, *the* maker. The narrative carefully weaves allusions and clues that may be understood as classical (e.g. red-figure pottery; astronomy and myth; marble sculpture; wild boar as a staple food; the sea; women and wine), but which first-time readers are meant to plot gradually as they follow the story to the end. From the outset, the man strikes us as oddly familiar: he could be a figure of cultural importance, even perhaps an ancient Greek, although we cannot yet ascertain his identity. In the opening paragraph, we learn about his character. For the maker, life experiences are not events to be recollected from memory, but ones that make up the very essence and spirit of his being:

He had never lingered amongst the pleasures of memory. Impressions, momentary and vivid would wash over him: a potter's vermilion glaze; the sky-vault filled with stars that were also gods; the moon, from which a lion had fallen; the smoothness of marble under his sensitive, slow fingertips; the taste of wild boar meat, which he liked to tear at with brusque, white bites; a Phoenician word; the black shadow cast by a spear on the yellow sand; the nearness of the sea or women; heavy wine, its harsh edge tempered by honey – these things could flood the entire circuit of his soul.⁴

We next follow the maker's endless wanderings around the world, all of which begin to add a spatially global quality to his character and experience. Now overcome by blindness, and mysteriously older by what appears to be centuries, 'gradually, the splendid universe began drawing away from him', and '[e]verything grew distant, and indistinct'.⁵ The world of sensorial experience, specifically that illuminated by vision, abandons him, and he perceives that all he has left is his recollections. Then he begins to descend into a labyrinth of forgotten childhood and manhood memories. These come to him 'the way one might feel upon recognizing a melody of a voice', but also as a kind of *déjà vu*: he senses 'that all this had happened to him before'.⁶ Two memories, adventure and love, are the most acute, and finally lead him – and Borges's readers – to the revelation of whom he once was and what his destiny had been. It is at this last point in the narrative that Borges gives us concrete classical references that identify the man, the maker who we had encountered in the title, with Homer, the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*:

With grave wonder, he understood. In this night of his mortal eyes in which he was descending love and adventure were also awaiting him. Ares and Aphrodite – because now he began to sense a rumour of glory and hexameters, a rumour of men who defend a temple that the gods will not save, a rumour of black ships that set sail from his beloved isle, the rumour of the *Odysseys* and *Iliads* that it was his fate to sing and to leave echoing in the cupped hands of human memory.⁷

The importance of 'The Maker' in Borges's construction of his own public and private authorship and autobiography is an important factor in this piece, as it is in 'The Immortal', discussed below, and other texts in which Borges explores the Homeric tradition.⁸ Here, I wish to draw attention to the manner in which Borges reimagines Homer for his readers. By appeal to a riddle that takes us from what seems strangely familiar to something we realize we already know, Borges invites us to recall the Greek poet and the texts that we attribute to him, while simultaneously creating a new memory of a Homeric postclassical life, or of a 'Homer after Homer'. On one level, 'The Maker' works as a supplementary narrative which, fictionally speaking, adds an unexplored biographical dimension to the post-Homeric life. On another level, it invites us to rediscover Homer and his poetry by bringing back their memory in the shape of a rumour that comes from his biographical past. Arguably, the revolutionary aspect of this story is not the past memory it ultimately recollects – after all, we don't need Borges's story to remember that the poet we call Homer is the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. What shows

great innovation is the experimental narrative through which the story takes us to recall the Homeric life and afterlife: 'The Maker' first stages a cognitive distance between us and the Greek poet by imagining a facet of his post-Homeric life that we, naturally, don't know and have to plot, then narrows down that gap by appealing to a whisper that reminds us of the Homeric past we know well.

The motif of the classical past as a whispering memory that puts antiquity and modernity into an experimental dialogue forms a significant part of Borges's approach to reading the classics. Yet this approach presupposes a bold reconfiguration of our reception strategies. For not only does this Borgesian perspective make demands on our mnemonic relation with the past, but it also has the effect of destabilizing the 'normal' directionality coordinates that characterize our reading of the classics in (Western) historical time and cultural space.

Pierre Menard's *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*

The classical canon partakes of an equally intriguing journey in Borges's 'Pierre Menard: Author of the *Quixote*', published in *Fictions* in 1944. While in 'The Maker' Borges explores the interplay of temporal and locative distance and closeness to recall the memory of Homer, 'Pierre Menard' opens new routes to re-reading the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*, and the classics more generally, by disrupting the logic of original and imitation that dominates Western literary history. This fiction relates the story of Pierre Menard, an early-twentieth-century author who sets himself the task of rewriting Cervantes's novel verbatim, while claiming that his version of the *Quixote* is as original as Cervantes's. The two texts, or at least the lines that Menard technically reproduces from Part I, Chapter IX of Cervantes's *Quixote*, are identical but their meanings turn out to be markedly different.⁹ As Menard explains:

I have assumed the mysterious obligation to reconstruct, word by word, the novel that for him (Cervantes) was spontaneous ... Composing the *Quixote* in the early seventeenth century was a reasonable, necessary, perhaps even inevitable undertaking: in the early twentieth, it is virtually impossible. Not for nothing have three hundred years elapsed, freighted with the most complex events. Amongst those events, to mention but one, is the *Quixote* itself.¹⁰

Borges's 'Menard' articulates a paradox: two exact same texts of the *Quixote* turn out to mean different things when produced and read in

different centuries.¹¹ This notion may appear to recall the premises of (new)historicism, which, despite its many revisions, continues to stress the importance of interpreting texts according to the contexts in which they are produced. Yet Borges is not a standard-issue historicist (old or new). By its central paradox, 'Menard' undermines any view of the primacy of original meaning: the same words mean differently, and that is not just a question of how one contextualizes them (in fact, could a corollary be that 'different' might mean 'the same'?).¹² The paradox could also be seen to foreshadow what would become one of the most enduring theories of (classical) reception to date, where the meaning of a text is realized at the moment of its reception.¹³ However, Borges's concern is not exactly who or what guarantees the meaning of the text. His interest is in the question of the status and identity that texts acquire in the course of cultural history, a history that tends to operate chronologically and categorize texts in the canon in terms of original and adaptation. For Borges, Menard's *Quixote* can claim to be as original as Cervantes's. Or, put differently, Cervantes's *Quixote* can equally be understood as a version of the *Quixote de La Mancha* just as Menard's is. This is because, Borges argues, neither of these texts are definitive stories of the fictional *Quixote*. It does not matter who wrote it first. Each of the stories is a rendition of a fictional idea that already exists, as all knowledge exists and can be (re)discovered, rather than originally invented and subsequently copied, by us. Hence we have the story of a knight called *Quixote* who comes from *La Mancha*, a story that can be told differently, even when the same words are used, in the seventeenth, twentieth or any century in between and after. 'Fate enjoys repetitions, variations, symmetries', Borges argues in 'The Plot' (1981), a short fiction that explores the cyclical repetition of Caesar's assassination in the murder of a gaucho from the Argentine Pampas. Despite the fact that we know that Cervantes's version appears before Menard's, we can still read both of them as variation – as *versions* – of an ongoing theme that exists, regardless of who relates it first or last. This premise can equally be applied, as the Borgesian narrator concludes in 'Menard', to our reading of classical themes, such as Odysseus's and Aeneas's travels in Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, the latter of which is typically plotted as a reworking of the former. Thus the story concludes:

Menard has (perhaps unwittingly) enriched the slow and rudimentary art of reading by means of a new technique – the technique, requiring infinite patience and concentration, encourages us to read the *Odyssey* as though it came after the *Aeneid* ... This technique fills the calmest books with adventure. Attributing the *Imitatio Christi* to Louis Ferdinand Céline or James

Joyce – is that not sufficient renovation of those faint spiritual admonitions?¹⁴

Menard's remarkable reading technique throws into disarray the pervasive structure and temporal order that organize our interpretation of canonical texts, like the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* (and so many other Greek and Latin texts), into original and copy by introducing the liberating idea of the *version* as an alternative exegetical paradigm. This paradigm becomes a guiding force in Borges's encounters with the Graeco-Roman past, and presents us with groundbreaking re-readings of Homer, the Greek lyric poets, the historic and fictional Caesar and Virgil, among other authors and themes from the classical canon which I discuss extensively elsewhere.¹⁵

Zeno after Kafka

The disarticulation of traditional forms of plotting the classics and their transmission takes on a further reconfiguration in Borges's 'Kafka and His Precursors' (1951). This fictional essay, one of Borges's outstanding discussions of the mechanisms of literary influence, focuses on a series of texts that the Argentine author sees as informing the narrative structure of Kafka's last, unfinished novel *The Castle* (1926). The first text that Borges identifies is Zeno's paradox against motion, retold by Aristotle in *Physics* 6.9.239b, and appealing to the figures of the arrow and Achilles as illustrations:

At one time I considered writing a study of Kafka's precursors. I had thought at first that he was as unique as the phoenix of rhetorical praise; after spending a little time with him, I felt I could recognize his voice, or his habits, in the texts of various literatures and various ages. I will note a few of them here, in chronological order. The first is Zeno's paradox against motion. A moving body at point A (Aristotle states) will not be able to reach point B, because it must first cover half of the distance between the two, and before that, half of the half, and before that, half of the half of the half, and so on to infinity; the form of this famous problem is precisely that of *The Castle*, and the moving body and the arrow and Achilles are the first Kafkaesque characters in literature.¹⁶

Studies in Borgesian poetics and theory generally read this fictional essay as a text that anticipates the perennial question of the ontology of the author and reader vis-à-vis the text that has preoccupied

thinkers before and since Barthes.¹⁷ What has received little or no attention is the unique manner in which Borges reimagines a classical theme in this fiction. In 'Kafka', we unexpectedly find Zeno of Elea's familiar reference to the flying arrow and Achilles racing against the tortoise in a light we have not seen them in before. With Borges, they cease to be mere examples of Greek analytical philosophy to become no less than 'the first Kafkaesque characters in literature'. This, Borges maintains, is what makes them the very precursors of Kafka. Yet this innovative recasting of Zeno's illustrations into dramatic, influential figures of early-twentieth-century world literature is not without a further sense of paradox:

If I am not mistaken, the heterogeneous pieces I have listed resemble Kafka; if I am not mistaken, not all of them resemble each other. This last fact is most significant. Kafka's idiosyncrasy is present in each of these writings, to a greater or lesser degree, but if Kafka had not written, we would not have perceived it; that is to say, it would not exist ... The word 'precursor' is indispensable to the vocabulary of criticism, but one must not try to purify it from connotation of polemic or rivalry. The fact is that each writer *creates* his precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future.¹⁸

Here, Borges calls for a redefinition of the word 'precursor', which, he argues, is a critical tool for plotting a competitive relation between source and target texts. Yet his search for a redefinition of this critical idiom is even more far-reaching. We have seen that Borges presents Achilles and the ancient Greek arrow as the precursors of the narrative structure of Kafka's *The Castle*. Paradoxically, however, these classical figures become precursors of Kafka only after *The Castle* implicitly points to their literary influence on its narrative structure. In other words, their influence as 'the first Kafkaesque characters in literature' can only be grasped *after* we read Kafka (and Borges). Zeno's familiar characters then undergo a radical revision, as Borges discloses an early-twentieth-century writer's ability to modify, as Borges concludes, 'our conception of the past, as it will modify the future'. As with the question of literary succession in Borges's 'Menard', the notion of literary influence that we find in 'Kafka' further disrupts long-established orders of plotting the classical past. In Borges, this crucial reconfiguration is intimately connected to the author's conception of 'Heraclitean time' (i.e. time conceived as an ever-running river) and its volatile flux in literary history, a theme that receives special attention in Borges's oeuvre.¹⁹

Classical memory and forgetfulness

The interplay of memory and forgetfulness is intrinsic to Borges's plotting of the classics and their tradition. This feature is particularly apparent in Borges's innovative approach to reading 'classical absences' (discussed in the next section), by which Borges principally means the Greek and Roman classics that we have forgotten once existed, either because they are lost to us, or because they have been 'eclipsed' from our memory as a result of the cultural impact of other surviving canonical texts. Borges elaborates on the makings of his own literary memory in a dialogue with the Argentine critic and poet Osvaldo Ferrari in 1984:

My memory is rather a memory of quotations from pages of poetry I have read ... these quotations are from texts that imposed themselves on my memory; they have moved me to such a point that they have become unforgettable ... Now, I think that memory requires forgetting. The justification of this thought can be found in my story 'Funes the Memorious'.²⁰

'Memory requires forgetting': indeed, 'Funes the Memorious' is arguably one of the most thought-provoking representations of this notion in twentieth-century fiction. In this story, we encounter the prodigious yet monstrous memory of Ireneo Funes, a barely educated Uruguayan with a bizarre passion for both the Latin language and Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis*. After two meetings with Funes, the Borgesian narrator (presented in this story as an erudite reader of Latin and connoisseur of the classics), describes Funes's unprecedented condition:

[Funes] is virtually incapable of general, platonic ideas. Not only is it difficult for him to see that the generic symbol 'dog' took all the dissimilar individuals of all shapes and sizes ... [his] own face in the mirror, his own hands surprised him every time he saw them ... He saw – he *noticed* – the progress of death, of humidity. He was solitary, lucid spectator of a multiform, momentaneous, and almost unbearably precise world ... To think is to ignore (or forget) differences, to generalize, to abstract. In the teeming world of Ireneo Funes there was nothing but particulars – and they were virtually *immediate* particulars.²¹

'Funes the Memorious' is a rich text that has been analysed in multiple ways by scholars of different disciplines, from the arts and humanities to the neurosciences.²² Yet little has been said about Funes as a

reader, or plotter, of reality. As the Borgesian narrator describes him, Funes is not a close – indeed extreme – reader of the empirical world, since he cannot identify particulars and use those identifications to generate abstract thought. This is because he recalls every single thing that he sees, feels, hears or touches anew, to the point that his mind becomes a collector of unprocessed data (as Funes explains to his interlocutor, ‘My mind is like a garbage heap’).²³ Funes therefore cannot grasp the concept of ‘a dog’, as Borges points out. Instead, he remembers every single instance that he has seen one, without being able to process these instances into the abstract figure or notion that we identify as ‘dog’. The same occurs with his own facial identity: every time he sees his face in the mirror, he does not see ‘Funes’ but a face of someone called Funes, which he will repeatedly discover anew until his death. By contrast, through his lifespan, Funes is able to picture *detailed totalities* in a way that our selective memory, one guided by reason and abstraction, does not allow us to do. Conceived this way, one can argue that Funes is a *universal reader of reality* by virtue of his ability to capture every single instance of everything in quantifiable detail, as if he were recording sequences for a universal, rather than a specific film. In fact, the film metaphor seems apt: while most of us are able to follow a story in a film because each particular shot is shown in fast motion, Funes instead sees each particular shot in the slowest of motions, without grasping the story. He can plot the *whole* through its essential components, not its possible logic or meaning.

These contrasting, indeed extreme modes of apprehending reality, arising from Borges’s formulation of the interplay of memory and oblivion, become crucial in his approach to our recollection of the Graeco-Roman past. For Borges, the classics both form and inform this approach, as they do in ‘Funes the Memorious’. Particularly impressive in this story is Funes’s word-for-word recitation in Latin of lines in Pliny the Elder’s *Historia Naturalis* Chapter 24 on the topic of memory, one that amazes the erudite classicism of the Borgesian bourgeois narrator. Furthermore, the second part of the narrative is centred around Pliny’s catalogue of classical figures with outstanding mnemonic skills, such as Cyrus, King of Persia, Mithridates Eupator and Simonides of Ceos, and closes with an intertext to Horace’s *monumentum* at the beginning of *Odes* 3.30 (‘exegi monumentum aere perennius/regalique situ pyramidum altius’, 1–2), which monumentalizes Funes’s inexhaustible memory (‘[Funes] seemed as monumental as bronze, more ancient than Egypt, anterior to the prophecies and the pyramids’).²⁴ In his innovative engagement with an Uruguayan gaucho, Pliny, Horace and classical erudition in general, Borges offers perceptive comments not only on the

interaction of memory and abstract thought, but also on two contrasting ways of recalling the classical past. With the narrative of Funes, Borges implicitly prompts us to reconsider the part that memory plays in our modes of acquiring knowledge of classical antiquity: in our modern engagement with antiquity, should we attempt to recollect each possible instance of its totality in the manner of Funes? What would that look like? Or should we perhaps accept that the distant past can never be fully recalled, and that our cultural memory is necessarily the result of a form of forgetfulness? Furthermore, how does our manner of building the memory of the classical past compare to that of Funes's monumental recollection of the classics? Borges's recollection of Horace, who attempts to build the *Odes* as a literary monument by selecting and concentrating a wealth of available *materia* into a poetic collection, further complicates this series of reflections: the 'monument' we build out of the classical past is marked simultaneously by impulses towards totality and distillation, by obsessive memorization and formative forgetting.²⁵ Borges's problematization of our (Western) mode of recollecting the past underpins the various theoretical and methodological considerations of the interplay of classics and cultural memory recently rehearsed in 'Deep Classics', a collection that engages in an interesting, indeed productive, dialogue with the present volume.²⁶

Classical absences and desires

One further dimension of Borges's classicism worth exploring here is the unique manner in which our author discloses levels of presence of classical texts that are either temporarily eclipsed or permanently lost to us. We find an important example of this phenomenon in Borges's references to Tacitus, whose presence in the Borgesian oeuvre receives dramatic levels of focalization. In 'The Garden of Forking Paths', one of Borges's most labyrinthine fictions, the main character, called Tsun, gets in a train to the South West of England. As Tsun looks for a seat in the empty train, he particularly notices a young passenger fervently reading the *Annals* ('There was almost no one ... I walked through the cars ... I recall ... a young man fervently reading Tacitus' *Annals*').²⁷ The reference to Tacitus's text amounts to no more than a few words. Yet, the fact that Tacitus is unexpectedly mentioned at a highly focalized moment in Borges's multiple-level narrative, as well as the manner in which Tacitus is being read – 'con fervor' – by an absorbed reader, advertises this classical author as a highly desirable text for readers of Borges's own fiction. Something similar, yet more dramatic, occurs in a brief citation of Tacitus in 'The Library of Babel' (1944). Babel is a metaphor for the eternal character of the universe and our

inability to grasp its immense totality, whether this is conceived in terms of space or time. It also represents the extraordinary concept of what would be known in Borges's Spanish as 'la literatura completa', the 'Universe of Letters' that exists in and outside of the world of human letters, as well as in and outside of human time, and where nothing remains unwritten and therefore unread:

The Library is 'total' – perfect, complete, and whole ... its bookshelves contain all ... all that is able to be expressed, in every language. *All* – the detailed history of the future, the autobiographies of archangels, the faithful catalogue of the Library, thousands and thousands of false catalogues, the proof of the falsity of those catalogues, the proof of the falsity of the true catalogue, the Gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary upon that gospel, the commentary on the commentary on that gospel, the true story of your death, the translation of every book in every language, the interpolations of every book in all books, the treatise Bede could have written (but did not) on the mythology of the Saxon people, the lost books of Tacitus.²⁸

The citation of Tacitus's lost books at the close of this catalogue of unknown literatures and histories should not escape us. Here, not only do Tacitus's lost *Histories* and *Annals* of Caligula, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian emerge as the incomplete text par excellence, but also as a highly desirable text because it is well outside our reach. As we are told in Borges's story, generations of librarians dwelling in the hexagons of Babel have struggled unsuccessfully to discover the mysterious 'Total Book', *the* index of all indices, which records all knowledge unavailable to us, including 'the lost books of Tacitus'. Borges's engagement with Tacitus taps a central issue that preoccupies those in the field of reception and its most recent rethinking²⁹: How do we approach our reading of the fragmentary, and especially the lost, literary past? Do we attempt to reconstruct its textuality in full, despite knowing that not all of it can be recovered, or do we experience it as we have inherited it: in parts? At first sight, Borges seems to offer a therapeutic approach to our reading of Tacitus's fragmentary text. He seems to be telling us that reading a classic like Tacitus necessarily involves recalling – and accepting – the incompleteness of the Tacitean text. Yet, his therapeutic readings of fragmentary antiquity are not without a sense of paradox. For, while Borges calls attention to incompleteness as an inevitable condition we must accept, the librarians of the Library of Babel clearly do not accept this condition, and are obsessed with finding the 'Total Book', which among all things lost to us, contains the missing part of Tacitus's text. One might therefore equally argue that Borges's story

demonstrates that we must accept our own inevitable, if unfulfillable, desire for completeness; that is, that we must accept that we will be driven by a desire we can never fulfil.

Borges's exploration of classical absences implicitly reveals the motives behind our desire for recuperating the past, while pointing to a radical philosophy of reading human letters. For his classical ontologies disclose the highly complex texture that past culture acquires as it becomes increasingly fragmentary, lost, forgotten, eclipsed and, on rare occasions, invisibly present.

The examples explored thus far are suggestive of the provocative dimensions and directions of Borges's extreme classicism, a model for interpreting the classical past that emerges in deep contrast with mainstream methods of plotting ancient texts and their impact on distant space and time. Each of the cases that I have outlined point to the ways in which the Argentine author reconfigures the traditional paradigms by which we tend to read the classical canon and its tradition, particularly at the heart of the West. We have seen that Borges places concepts such as sound, forgetfulness and absences at the centre of his radical rethinking. His classical revisions moreover innovatively re-familiarize us with Graeco-Roman antiquity. They do so by staging a sense of temporal and locative distance and closeness between us and the past, which re-awakens dormant aspects of our memory and discloses powerful new understandings of the classics in the modern imagination. The effects of this reconfiguration of antiquity are numerous, not only in Borges's corpus, but also in classical receptions after the Borgesian model, such as those of Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco and Derek Walcott.³⁰ Borges's revisions furthermore give a distinct texture to the classical canon, as the author resituates this literary culture in the remote, indeed extreme non-canonical scenarios and landscapes of his avant-garde fiction and criticism. At the core of this procedure, we find an author whose cultural outlook emerges somewhere at the crossroads of two contrasting cultures of the West, Argentina and Europe, and whose mid- and late oeuvre increasingly exhibits globalizing aims and ambitions.

Classics at the crossroads: Towards a centreless vision

Born at the turn of twentieth-century Argentina in an Anglo-Spanish family, and educated both in his country and Geneva, Borges's upbringing was culturally diverse. This diversity is also evident in Borges's authorial identity, which one could argue is neither fully

Argentine nor precisely 'international'. On the one hand, especially when one thinks of Borges's mid- and late writings, which launch him into the international scene, he is an instantly recognizable name worldwide, as is the case with Proust, Kafka and Joyce. On the other hand, Borges remains a quintessentially Argentine writer, especially for the Argentine and Latin American reader used to thinking of his writings as belonging to the literary tradition of the New World. One reason for this sense of dual, interrelated identity is that Borges is an author who emerges at the crossroads where the European tradition meets the cultural developments of postcolonial Argentina.³¹ In fact, this is what Borges himself argues is the character of the Argentine writer producing literature in the Argentina and South America of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In an essay titled 'The Argentine Writer and Tradition', Borges explores a series of definitions on the question of Argentine literature. One of these is by his near-contemporary Leopoldo Lugones (1874–1938), who in *El payador*³² makes a passionate case for José Hernández's *Martín Fierro*, a 2,316-line epic work of gauchesque literature typically read as Argentina's 'Homeric epic', and considered *the* classic Argentine poem. Here, Borges's concern is with how literary works are understood as canonical by virtue of their predominantly national characteristics:

There [in *El payador*] we read that the Argentines possess a classic poem, *Martín Fierro*, and that this poem should be for us what the Homeric poems were to the Greeks ... I believe that *Martín Fierro* is the most lasting work we Argentines have written; I also believe, with equal intensity, that we cannot take *Martín Fierro* to be, as has sometimes been said, our Bible, our canonical book.³³

Borges follows this statement with a further elaboration on and refutation of attempts to define Argentine canonical literature by its local colour, its relation to Spanish culture or a desire to break away from European literary influence. He concludes by offering a definition that reclaims Western culture as a fundamental aspect of the Argentine tradition, while widening the scope of what the Western tradition may mean when regarded from outside of Europe:

What is the Argentine tradition? ... I believe that our tradition is the whole of Western culture, and I also believe that we have a right to this tradition, a greater right than that which the inhabitants of one Western nation or another may have ... I believe that Argentines, and South Americans in general ... can take on all the European subjects, take them on without superstition and with an irreverence that can have, and already

has had, fortunate consequences.³⁴

One of these 'fortunate consequences' is, of course, Borges's own oeuvre, which blends with utmost creativity a variety of Western elements, while remaining simultaneously local and European. Yet the cultural blend and interchange of two branches of the West that we find in Borges is equally informed by antiquity itself, and more specifically by the further cultural fusions of East and West that Borges finds at the very heart of the peripheral communities of ancient Greece. Note, for instance, his understanding of what Rome and Magna Graecia represent in terms of Western identity in an interview held just before his trip to Italy in 1984:

I know Rome clearly, I could even say, like all Westerners, 'ciuis romanus sum' – I am a citizen of Rome. But now I will know the South, Greater Greece. You could say that the West began to think in Greater Greece – in parts of Asia Minor and the South of Italy.³⁵

Here, Borges makes an implicit, if perhaps over-generalized, contrast between Magna Graecia and ancient Rome. For him, Rome represents one meaning of the West: a meaning that we (and *he*) tend to assume to be the homogeneous cultural formation that we identify as 'Western Europe' and its tradition. By contrast, he understands the culture of Greater Greece to have emerged from a diverse fusion of East and West, which Rome later inherited and made it not only its own cultural inheritance but also its gravitational centre. This conception of the ancient Greek world is beautifully articulated in Borges's prologue to his *Conversations* with Ferrari, cited above, where he plots the makings of Western culture in a manner that the Lucretius of *De Rerum Natura* would certainly have enjoyed:

The best event recorded in universal history happened in Ancient Greece some 500 years before the Christian era, namely, the discovery of dialogue. Faith, certainty, dogmas, anathemas, prayers, prohibitions, orders, taboos, tyrannies, wars and glory overwhelmed the world while some Greeks to the East and West of their mainland acquired the peculiar habit of conversation – how, we'll never know. They doubted, persuaded, dissented, changed their minds, postponed. Perhaps their mythology helped them, which was, as with the Shinto, an accumulation of vague fables and variable cosmologies. These scattered conjectures were the first root of what we call today, perhaps pretentiously, metaphysics. Western culture is inconceivable without these few Greeks. Remote in space and time, this volume (the *Conversations*

In this passage, Western culture is an 'event' that emerges 2,500 years ago at the crossroads of two sides of ancient Greece, the East and West, by which Borges means Magna Graecia, Asia Minor and Sicily, as well as the ancient Greek mainland. This event, this cultural form, turns out to be the notion of *dialogos*, of conversation, which the ancients mastered, and which Borges now hears as a 'muffled echo' from antiquity, just as the blind and timeless Homer of 'The Maker' finally hears the 'distant rumour' of his prior authorship and works. Like remote atoms, the cross-cultural conversations of those Greeks now take new forms in Borges's own conversations with Ferrari in the Argentina of 1984–5, also the product of profound fusions of the European and peripheral West. The connection is distant, but the sense of classical antiquity's renewal in Borges's modern Buenos Aires is palpable.

A close study of Borges's cross-cultural classicism furthermore reveals something more complex: his growing interest in and appeal to the cultures of the East and Far East in his middle and late period. This interest gives the increasing impression that his authorship, and hence his classicism, is global.³⁷ One rhetorical technique that Borges uses to globalize his classics can be found in his appeal to syncretism, especially with the Far East. We have seen how, in his dialogue with Osvaldo Ferrari cited above, Borges is keen to liken the eclectic mythologies that inform Magna Graecia's dialogical phenomena in his own conversation to the 'vague fables' and 'variable mythologies' of the Shinto.³⁸ This comparative method often extends to Borges's configuration of classical time in relation to Buddhism and its notions of eternal renewal of the past, which I elaborate in detail elsewhere.³⁹ Crucially, the striking effect of this technique is that, for Borges's readers, his classics can be appear, or be referred to, *anywhere* in space and time, whether this effect is achieved by appeal to distant, errant sound in time or by cultural syncretisms. In this sense, Borges's classicism is intensely 'atopic'; that is, in his understanding of the classical tradition, he does not insist on a specific territorial or cultural claim.

Throughout Borges's oeuvre, one finds powerful examples of this form of classicism, above all in the transcultural geographies and 'posthistories' that he creates for his Homer in 'The Immortal' (1949), a short yet highly complex fiction that may be interpreted as a universal version of Joyce's *Ulysses*. While Stephen Daedalus wanders the city of Dublin for a day on the stage of Joyce's experimental narrative, the Homer of Borges's 'The Immortal' becomes an ever-expanding canon that travels erratically and atemporally through the

centuries, acquiring multiple identities, until he reaches the climactic – quasi-explosive – point of oblivion outside his place in human and literary history:

I have been Homer; soon like Ulysses, I shall be Nobody; soon, I shall be all men. I shall be dead.⁴⁰

The Homer that moves ‘atopically’ between ancient Greece, his postclassicism and his afterlife in the unknown universe is succinctly portrayed in Borges’s essay on ‘Blindness’ (1977), in which he reflects on the uncertainty of the biographical life of Homer⁴¹:

Perhaps there was no single Homer; perhaps there were many Greeks whom we conceal under the name of Homer.⁴²

As Borges relocates Homer and the classics between distance and closeness, absence and presence, memory and oblivion, East and West, periphery and centre, and world and universal categories, one is inclined to conclude that his classicism strives towards a global vision. Yet this globalizing vision does not aim to produce an image of homogeneous totality, nor does it attempt to ‘flatten’ antiquity to an ‘iconic’ image,⁴³ in which the classics lose their historical and cultural root or place. Rather, I would contend that Borges understands Graeco-Roman antiquity to exhibit an intrinsically cross-cultural element, which has the potential to proliferate in space and time in multiple ways and directions, thus problematizing any claim to the ‘legitimate’ borders of its tradition.

In his encounters with antiquity, Borges constantly shifts between a cultural marginality that strives towards a universalizing vision of the classics and a vision of a classical universe that seems radically eccentric, in the etymological sense of the word.⁴⁴ This approach to the classical world and to the history of ideas in general is encapsulated in ‘Pascal’s Sphere’ (1951), a fictional essay that traces the cultural history of the metaphor of the circle as an analogue for divinity, the universe and infinity. In this fiction, Borges reworks a memorable line by the seventeenth-century French philosopher Blaise Pascal: ‘That intellectual sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere’ (*Selected Non-Fictions* 352). Pascal’s metaphor opens up a theoretical and methodological framework for exploring the *modus operandi* of Borges’s extreme classical forms, especially when it comes to his experimental ambition to resituate the classical canon in the often un-classical realms of world literature. If one were pressed to reduce Borges’s classical vision to its very essence, this would be its *centrelessness*. His outlook on the classics tends to circumvent the enduring paradigm that characterizes the gravitational

plots of Western intellectual history, a history that tends to regard classical antiquity as the very origin and centre of its cultural identity and tradition. While Borges does not deny the fundamental importance of the classics in the formation of the Western canon and intellectual thought, he equally conceives of a classical canon whose stage is the cultural world at large. Thus his Homer is a classic that coexists between the rumour of his pre-classical past and the bizarre stages of twentieth-century fiction, just as his Tacitus coexists between the established canon and Babel's eternity. This is classics born 'at the crossroads' of the two versions of the West – centre and periphery – but whose horizons are seamlessly 'global'.

CHAPTER 12

THE COSTLY FABRIC OF CONSERVATISM CLASSICAL REFERENCES IN CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC CULTURE

Maarten De Pourcq

Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship between classics, political conservatism and contemporary public culture. The phenomenon of conservatism and its relationship with classics has been somewhat under the radar of classical reception studies,¹ possibly because the conservative conception of the classical in terms of tradition, continuity and identity is at odds with the conceptual and ideological framework of classical reception studies, at least for their major theorists, given their interest in the modern theoretical humanities and the overall emphasis on adapting and rewriting the classics for the modern age.² Interestingly, Antoine Compagnon has shown in *Les antimodernes* that even among the French modernists the ‘anti-modern’ has been a lingering if not substantial sensibility: a reaction or a feeling of resistance against cultural change and the cult of progress defining the modern age. Compagnon traces back the origins of this traditionalist structure of feeling to the French Revolution, a ‘decisive and fatal turning point’ in modern history,³ where the roots of contemporary Western democracy can be found, as well as the beginnings of modern conservatism, in its equally ambivalent resistance to the project of the Enlightenment, with its progressive ideals of secularism, rationalism, individualism, equality and liberty. A second historical turning point that needs to be taken into account here, of a similar fatal nature, is the Second World War and its negative impact upon nationalist – usually conservative – identity politics, tipping the balance in favour of progressive, pacifist and cosmopolitan values, which seemed to align well with a globalizing

world and an allegedly open economy in the second half of the twentieth century.

In our current historical juncture, this balance seems to shift into a different direction, given the recent election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States, the Brexit referendum to leave the European Union (EU), and the rise of populist and nationalist movements across Europe. Even though these events cannot simply be put on a par, as there are (or ought to be) differences between compassionate conservatism, populist nationalism and anti-establishment radicalism, they do have in common that they are all closely intertwined with the mediatization of our public culture. The variety of our current media – both traditional ('mainstream'), digital and social – as well as their considerable outreach has altered the landscape of contemporary political culture. This can easily be seen in the careers of key individual politicians in several Western countries (e.g. Trump in the United States, Nigel Farage in the United Kingdom, Beppe Grillo in Italy, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Bart De Wever in Belgium), each of whom can be seen to masterfully interact with the media in such a way that they have become major political players, in most cases even without the support, or from the periphery of, an established political party. These makers of our current history are telling examples of how our media age has facilitated a new discursive space, defined by accelerated information flows, greater and unfettered accessibility, and less editorial control. This new space appears to enable people to express much more freely and visibly their anti-establishment opinions as well as their feelings of cultural crisis, social unease and xenophobia, at times including a hate discourse against immigrants, minorities and political opponents that has seldom been seen after the Cold War in the democratic West. The accompanying verbal and physical violence (in extreme cases even leading to murder: for example, Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, Jo Cox in the UK and the many victims of all sorts of terrorist attacks) shows a Western world under severe pressure. The politicians mentioned above, in one way or another, make clever use of these extreme historical circumstances and this new discursive space to make their claims to power.

Within this setting, stereotypical to even archetypal references, sometimes revealing people's deepest, if not cliché, anxieties and traumas, can be seen to abound: the *reductio ad Hitlerum* of anti-migration voices, for instance, or the return of allegedly repressed because 'politically incorrect' stereotypes of the non-white and/or non-male and/or non-heterosexual other. One startling example of the latter was Trump's portrayal of a critical female journalist, Megyn Kelly, as a prototypical vampire: 'There was blood coming out of her

eyes, blood coming out of her ... wherever.’⁴ This archetypal image of the she-monster, well known from popular culture, associating female resistance to male dominance with menstruation blood and the threatening female sex, an image going back to ancient myths like Medusa’s head,⁵ is just one example of how classical intertexts have become involved in contemporary political culture. Other examples include much more explicit references to antiquity and its long-standing reception, ranging from historical events like the Battle of Thermopylae to classicist architecture, Greek tragedies, the Roman Empire and Latin sayings. The presence of these classical references may come as a surprise, since one does not as a rule associate the current populist climate with politicians voicing their classical penchant and in so doing exhibiting their possibly elitist classical education. In what follows, I will try to outline three major reasons why these classical references are not as fortuitous as they may seem. In short, these three perspectives are the following: (1) the cult of personality; (2) the classical presence as cultural coherence and (3) the current memory wars. In the first part of this chapter, I will connect these three perspectives to various examples of contemporary conservative politicians and political practices. In the second part, I will use the Belgian politician Bart De Wever as a showcase to bring these perspectives together. De Wever is a relatively moderate conservative nationalist, especially when compared to the radicalism of Trump or the ethnocentrism of Pegida (a shorthand for *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* [Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident], which in France had an occasional female branch called *Les Antigones*).⁶ However, despite his intellectualism, De Wever’s use of the classics clearly targets similar sensibilities and political enemies, reclaiming the classics from the grey area in which they have ended up at the beginning of the twenty-first century: hovering between the cultural margins and the symbolic heart of Western culture.

The cult of personality: The media star and the political dandy

One conspicuous aspect of contemporary politics is the dominance of media personalities. In most cases, leading politicians are (or first were) media stars, some of them owing their popularity to a long-standing presence in mainstream media, for instance in television shows (e.g. Trump’s *The Apprentice* or De Wever’s witty participation in the popular television quiz *De slimste mens*) or in national newspapers with personal columns. It has become part and parcel of

their political life to perform and to shape their actions and opinions in accordance with the mediatic self that they have been expressing (and usually also branding)⁷ all along. It is a self that needs to be distinctive to be mediatic and it is at this point that a classical education can become performative, functioning as a sign not so much of economic but (also) of spiritual aristocracy. It has often been noted that there is a strong albeit curious connection between populists and aristocracy, despite the wide gulf between their respective economic interests and sociocultural background, and those of their voters. In an age of cultural change, which is being perceived as an age of cultural loss, it certainly helps that the aristocrat is typically considered to be the caretaker of old humanist values, which is equally typically related to the disinterested study of the classics and their humanist legacies.⁸ As 'old-fashioned' as this figure may seem, the democratization and standardization processes that are characteristic for (post-)industrial societies have helped to turn this unconventional aristocrat into a heroic figure of resistance. That is why the aristocrat can be seen to embody an exemplary art of living that is aesthetically distinctive (at times moving towards dandyism and snobbism), grounded in a recognizable conservative morality and marked by non-conformism. Most of the populist politicians mentioned above share at least some of these characteristics.

A telling example is the late Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, who has been portrayed as a political dandy⁹ partly because of his flamboyant appearance and his affected manners. Openly homosexual and Catholic in a country where Calvinism is regarded as a defining element of its identity politics, his eccentric, charismatic and sensual style in combination with his academic pedigree – he was a doctor in sociology and was referred to as 'Professor Pim' in the media – distinguished him from the average politician-manager. His dandyism was not only iconic, it also inspired his style of politics. For the historical figure of the dandy appeared in the wake of the French Revolution as a reaction against the perceived loss of aristocratic ideals like distinction, wittiness, audacity and refinement in the new materialist bourgeois society.¹⁰ The dandy is a man of letters and an aesthete who looks upon his life as a work of art.¹¹ The contemporary media star has been interpreted as a descendant of this historical dandy figure.¹² In a similar vein, contemporary star politicians conceive of their life as a form of art (e.g. Trump's 1987 book *The Art of the Deal*) and display their unconventional aestheticism in their appearances (e.g. the signature white hairstyles of Wilders, Grillo, Trump and Boris Johnson). Fortuyn's political dandyism consists in his reaction against what he sees as an overblown modernity disrupting traditional community bonds like the church or the family. His 2002

book was significantly entitled *The Orphaned Society* (*De verweesde samenleving*), offering a crude historical and sociocultural analysis of modern Dutch society, arguing, for instance, that the violent and ugly aesthetics of contemporary art proves that the progressives have definitively lost track of what it means to be human. Hence, Fortuyn's dandyism is not just a matter of style – or rather, his style is also deeply political, as Geertjan de Vugt has argued:

The dandy is imagined as the figure that is able to bring back a harmonious *Stimmung* which European societies have lost with the advent of modernity. If the dandy is a *Stimmungsmacher*, he is one because he understood what no one else seemed to have understood: human communities are first and foremost aesthetic communities, in which the ordering of bodies, roles and senses is also always the expression of a certain beauty.¹³

The political dandy is seen as reasserting a classicist aesthetic, and in so doing he appeals to those who feel uneasy with the modern penchant for abstraction, anti-humanist criticism and individualization. Paradoxically, a dandy like Fortuyn uses radical individualism to break open the established political collectives, for example by creating his own political party and naming it after himself: List Fortuyn. This paradox ties in with the conception of the historical dandy as 'the last spark of heroism against decadence' (Baudelaire).¹⁴ To turn the tide, so the claim goes, we desperately need heroes: strong, charismatic and if need be totalitarian, leaders, rather than the parliament and strong political parties.¹⁵ Fortuyn's eccentric dandyism underscores this messianic individualism, capable of withstanding decadence. Interestingly, a main point of reference here is the decline of the Roman Empire. Fortuyn claims more than once that we are reliving 'the decadent aftermath of the Roman Empire'.¹⁶ The reference is a classic, just like the reading of this decline in terms of decadence and barbarism, from Edward Gibbon's *magnum opus*¹⁷ to the extreme case of the German National Socialists who attributed the apocalyptic downfall of both Greece and Rome to its mixed, cosmopolitan and barbarized cultures.¹⁸ Fortuyn does not take that route in his book, although he was among the first in the Netherlands to denounce what he called the 'Islamisation of our culture',¹⁹ depicting Muslims as the prototypical barbarian invaders. The term 'decadence' implies that there is also a structural problem within society itself, where certain political practices and cultural values appear to facilitate the barbarian invader, just like in Roman times.

One may wonder whether the use of the Roman example here is not critical rather than assertive, given the fact that it is first and foremost

a negative example, a warning based on a cultural catastrophe that has taken place in the past. Yet, it is also a salient example of what Zygmunt Bauman has termed ‘retrotopia’²⁰ to the extent that not only the forgotten potentials of the past but also its exemplary failures are used to nourish present-day political debate. This retrotopic type of conservative vision-making is based on turning backwards and reappropriating the past rather than developing radically new technological, ecological or social utopias. The revolutionary dimension of the political dandy lies in the fact that he challenges and demystifies the radically new by reinforcing and remystifying ‘the classical’, in its broadest sense. But instead of emphasizing its exclusive and elitist dimensions, as one might expect, the media dandy skilfully employs its popular and inclusive dimensions. Referencing the classical therefore may create a new form of ‘cultural intimacy’, stressing a *cultural* connection between people across the *social* divide that classical education usually is believed to implicate. One may even say that this social divide itself becomes inclusive in a new, imaginary way, reminding people of an era and a community in which leaders were distinctive, well educated and strong. It is almost needless to add here that this inclusion excludes other people in its turn, especially the newly arrived but also the second- and third-generation immigrants, most of whom paradoxically come from regions that have been part of the Hellenistic and Roman Empires. Even so, the classical repertoire that is used to evoke this imaginary community needs to be recognizable by a large group of people as part of the cultural fabric that is now believed to be threatened and culturally marginalized. That is why it is necessary to look more closely at the ways in which this repertoire is selected, valorized and communicated, especially in relation to popular culture.

The classical presence: Cultural industries and popular culture

In the past decades, there has been a continuous cultural recycling of the classics by both traditional high culture (e.g. opera and architecture – take the neoclassical interior of Trump’s penthouse in Trump Tower, New York) and the globalized cultural industries (e.g. television, videogames, comics). They help to keep at least a selection of classical narratives, imagery and forms on the radar of a wider audience. The very fact that the classical heritage is so deeply interwoven with our language and culture gives it a tantamount presence, even if this presence is not to be qualified as deliberate classical reception. That is why Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard and

Rosemary Barrow have adopted the term ‘reflex’ to refer to this type of classical presence in modern Western culture:

We borrow – and extend – this use of ‘reflex’ from historical linguistics, where the word stresses the fact of descent without any implication of purposeful transmission or adjustment: ‘reflex’ ... is a word or other linguistic form which is directly descended within a particular language from an ancestral form taken as a reference point. For example ... Italian *donna* ‘lady’ is a reflex of Latin ‘*domina(m)*’ ... In our extended usage, the word is reapplied from particular linguistic forms to whole language systems and other large behavioural structures.²¹

Counting the number of ancient reflexes in this single quotation, one will be astonished by the ubiquity of Latin in a what is still a non-Romanic modern language. This ubiquity gives a feeling of familiarity to any deliberate classical reference, even if the receiver lacks the precise historical knowledge. This may explain why cable television series or blockbuster movies, even though they are not treating any ancient topic, do not feel inhibited from making references to antiquity, or why companies and brands can carry classical names.²² These reflexes help to explain why people keep on using classical references rather than, for instance, Chinese, Indian or Arabic ones, despite their potential economic interest. If one wishes to stress cultural coherence, like Fortuyn and other conservative politicians do, the classical presence can be deployed as a crucial fibre of the fabric of modern culture, despite or along with its elitist connotations. But if ancient forms and ideas are so deeply and almost invisibly rooted in our culture, what if we wish to challenge the sexist, racist and imperialist aspects of ancient culture and how these hegemonic forces still shape Western culture?

Memory wars and identity politics

A third aspect is the role of memory in contemporary public culture. Cultural recycling is one example of a mnemonic practice, but the main point here is that memory has become a major political and institutional battlefield, even to the extent that one has begun to speak of ‘memory wars’,²³ with an allusion to the perhaps better-known ‘culture wars’. Different social or cultural groups compete for public attention and public financing to be able to preserve their cultural memories and narratives. Michael Rothberg has coined the term ‘competitive memory’ for this, giving the example of how representatives from the African American community in the United

States criticized the absence of a memorial museum for their national history in Washington, the political heart of the United States, while there is a Jewish memorial museum.²⁴ Competitive memory refers in the first instance to pressure groups of minorities, each striving for the acknowledgement of their traumatic losses in the course of a national history. The idea can also be used for a wider tendency in current identity politics. Conservative pressure groups, for instance, have started to express their concern for the conservation of ‘their’ (previously believed to be canonical) national or local traditions, somewhat disgruntled by the postcolonial and gender critiques of these traditions which, in some countries, have been adopted, usually in a mitigated form, by established, mostly left-wing, political parties, or have attracted much more media attention. Consequently, conservative politicians referencing classical traditions are tapping into not just their cultural prestige but also their contestedness, appealing to a cultural conservatism which in times of cultural change, globalization and socio-economic distress may not only work as a solace but also as an ideological statement that they are in their turn contesting the direction which some established political parties have taken, and which is presented as an ill-fated and insolent attempt to disrupt the basis of their cultural group, if not of society as a whole. For if there are any long-standing and culturally productive traditions of political, aesthetic and ethical standards that interconnect Western democratic societies, the classical tradition must surely be one of them.

One example of how the classics have played a role in the ongoing memory wars took place at the University of Vienna in spring 2016. Members of the ‘Identitäre Bewegung’ (Identitary Movement) interrupted a performance of Elfriede Jelinek’s *Die Schutzbefohlenen* (Charges), a creative adaptation of Aeschylus’s *Suppliants* which tries to give voice to the fate of refugees in Austria and elsewhere in Europe. The Identitary Movement squirted artificial blood, threw around flyers saying ‘*Multikulti tötet*’ (Multiculturalism kills), and shouted the Spartan battle cry from Zack Snyder’s film *300* (2006). The movie is based on Frank Miller’s eponymous graphic novel on the Battle of Thermopylae in which a small army of 300 Spartans heroically defended Greece against the Persian invader. Both film and comic received much criticism because of their racist and sexist representation of the Persians and their aestheticization of violence.²⁵ This gave the action group all the more reason to idolize it, appropriating the Lambda as depicted on the Spartan shields (‘Lacedaemonia’) as their main logo and using it on the flags during their so-called aesthetic interventions,²⁶ like the one in Vienna. By interrupting Aeschylus’s famous asylum play with the iconic battle

that, *dixit* 300, had safeguarded Europe from barbaric tyranny, two types of classical reception and mnemonic practices clashed, with the Identitary Movement reclaiming the European classics from what they regard as the leftist cosmopolitan elite.

Also in 2016, a similar classical reference was used by the Belgian politician Bart De Wever, leader of one of the largest political parties in the country, in an op-ed in a national newspaper. He argued that the Greek army led by Xenophon should inspire us to stand up against the Islamic threat just like the ancient Greeks did in their *anabasis*, this ‘marching democracy’ of the few against ‘the Persian threat’ of the many.²⁷ Although the history behind this reference tells a somewhat different story, it is significant that both the Identitary Movement and De Wever refer to the Persians in the very same year. Both make sure to argue that the superiority of the ancient Greeks must have come from their culture, not their race, which means that tapping into this cultural heritage is regarded as vital for our cultural survival, which they actively do in their op-eds, interviews and merchandising.²⁸ The other similarities are also striking: their blatant militarism, their symbolic use of a clash of civilizations (including the conspiracy theory of Islamization)²⁹ and their strategic distribution of numbers between the two camps (the few versus the many) to enlarge the cultural threat and to idealize their own underdog position, giving a heroic tone to their visionary apocalyptic language. Moreover, just like Fortuyn, they use a tactic of identification with the ancients, turning history into collective memory (with all its creative distortions and selective appropriations) and into a mnemonic practice of remembrance (the decadent downfall of the Roman Empire or the Battle of the 300, they matter today, we are almost ‘reliving’ and ‘reenacting’ them), invoking the exhortative power of a popularized classical aesthetic. In the past few years, the ‘Islamic threat’ has become a communication target shared by many conservative populists, much more than before; the 2006 op-ed was the first time De Wever thematized it so strongly. References to ancient Greece are rare in his writings, as De Wever mostly works with Roman references, which might indicate that conservative political movements are adjusting their media strategies to each other. For repeating images and frames means maximizing their impact in the ongoing memory wars in the media.³⁰

The ‘Romanization’ of Bart De Wever

In most populist discourses, classical references occur occasionally or in passing, since despite their distinctiveness they do not match well with the rapid style of media communication. This does not hold true

for the Flemish nationalist and modern historian Bart De Wever, for whom the Roman past has become a vital part of his media identity, also for his opponents. This can be seen in the way in which De Wever is satirized by the Walloon media. As a Flemish nationalist, De Wever is the natural enemy of Wallonia, the southern and French-speaking part of Belgium, from which Flemish nationalists seek to separate the northern and Dutch-speaking part, Flanders, especially since the First World War. During the Second World War many Flemish nationalists collaborated with Nazi Germany, which greatly complicated their strife after the war. In the satirical comic *Bad Bartje*, published in election time, De Wever has been portrayed as a frustrated conservative little boy, dressed in a brownish fashion reminiscent of the *Hitler Jugend*, who has constant dreams of becoming the new Caesar. At the back of the album, De Wever poses in a Roman tunic on a pillar amid burning flames, as if he had just, Nero style, set fire to the Belgian state.³¹ The elections turned out differently: his party, the N-VA or New Flemish Alliance, became part of the Belgian government after the 2014 elections, officially distancing itself from its first objective – Flemish independence – to realize another important objective: putting an end to the rule of socialism in Belgium, as the Walloon socialists had been in power for several decades until 2014. The N-VA is a liberal conservative party, although Flemish nationalism also has a socialist branch. Both branches used to be part of a single party, the *Volksunie*, until they split up in 2001. Whereas the leftist branch quickly became part of the governing coalition, the conservative branch hardly knew how to attract voters (3 per cent in 2003). This changed drastically with the advent of De Wever (28 per cent in 2010; 32 per cent in 2014) and thanks to a sophisticated media strategy that includes referencing ancient Rome.³²

For example, De Wever's profile page on the N-VA website ends with mentioning that 'Bart De Wever is a "fan" of Julius Caesar and knows about everything on ancient Rome'.³³ When the N-VA had its first considerable win, in the 2010 national elections, De Wever made his victory speech revolve around the Latin saying 'Constantia et Labore' (Through constancy and hard work). From then on, victory speeches as a rule contained Latin one-liners: in 2012, when De Wever was elected the mayor of Antwerp, he opened with 'Nil Volentibus Arduum' (Nothing is impossible for those who are willing) and in 2014 with 'Vicit Vim Virtus' (Virtue conquers force). These lines have a gimmicky nature, dressed up for the evening news, especially since the former is an acronym of the party's name and the latter went hand in hand with the mediatic V-fingers in the air. However, at least two of these sayings can be connected to De Wever's home town Antwerp. The motto 'Vicit Vim Virtus' can be found on a window of the St

George's Church: 'virtus' enabled this Christian hero to conquer the dragon.³⁴ 'Labore et Constantia' was since 1540 the motto of the world-famous Plantin Press, established in Antwerp and now a popular museum. The motto was taken from a Plantin edition of Justus Lipsius's *De Constantia* and celebrates its neostoicist view of life.³⁵

Even if these intertexts are not intended, the classical references certainly give voice to a Christian and neostoic morality, closely bound up with De Wever's conservatism. At the start of his political career, he spread his conservative word by a large number of op-eds and columns, which have been collected in two books with significant titles. The first was *Het kostbare weefsel* (The Costly Fabric) (2008), which is not only an oblique reference to his own surname (in English: 'Bart The Weaver'), but also a literal translation of 'the costly fabric of society', an iconic expression from the eighteenth-century Irish conservative Edmund Burke, who also spoke of 'the original fabric of society' as a reaction against the impact of the French Revolution.³⁶ The metaphor of the 'fabric' refers to the cohesiveness of a culture which is believed to have grown both historically and organically. The adjective 'costly' has a preventive connotation: the fabric has been created by a long collective effort and must therefore be safeguarded against the whims of Modernism. Conservatism is understood here as the ideology of care, preservation and durability, usually contested by its ideological opponents as a defence of the status quo. The title of De Wever's other book, *Practicable Values* (*Werkbare waarden*, 2011), exhibits a combination of morality and anti-theoretical pragmatics which present De Wever with his feet in tradition and his eyes on a more efficient future, which in a country with extremely complicated state structures obviously has a great appeal. When it comes to tradition, ancient Rome is crucial for De Wever's self-fashioning as well as self-understanding. When he married on 11 July 2009, the happy couple was not only received by a horde of press photographers outside the church, but also by a honour guard of Roman legionaries. Their weaponry, De Wever claimed in interviews, was a reconstruction from the time of Julius Caesar. The wedding date was chosen not only because it celebrated the Flemish national holiday, but also because the month was named after Caesar.³⁷ The juxtaposition of the Catholic Church and the classical tradition in the press pictures is crucial here: they represent the European traditions that, in the eyes of De Wever, risk disappearing and in so doing would leave a spiritual void that cannot be compensated for by leftist (i.e. secularist, utopian, individualist) ideologies.³⁸ Instead of the postmodern cultural and moral relativism, a new community of values needs to come into being, for which De Wever is prepared to engage

his own person.

Classical references play an important role in this connection between person and politics. According to De Wever, there is a tradition among Belgian politicians to identify themselves with famous Roman politicians. Browsing his interviews, one can compose a Roman pantheon of contemporary Belgian politics. De Wever reports that Herman Van Rompuy, former prime minister and the first president of the European Council, liked to identify himself with Cincinnatus.³⁹ Elio di Rupo, the Walloon socialist and also a former prime minister, had Hadrian as his favourite.⁴⁰ When De Wever tried to outmanoeuvre the socialist Patrick Janssens, back then the mayor of Antwerp, he came up with a comparison with Nero.⁴¹ Women do not seem to play a role in this pantheon, possibly due to their relative absence in the classical repertoire itself, but it is symptomatic for how cultural conservatism paves the way for exclusion. De Wever's historical parallels frequently echo the inflated and fabulous stories from popular Roman history. For instance, the liberal populist Jean-Marie Dedecker becomes in the eyes of De Wever 'a veritable tribune like in ancient Rome', because 'nearly all of them have ended up with a knife in their bodies'.⁴² De Wever himself would love to be a Caesar (according to Baudelaire, one of the first dandies!),⁴³ even to the extent that he fantasizes about finding a similar death, but thinks he is rather a Cicero.⁴⁴ Hence, a rhetorical genius rather than a dexterous politician? This image certainly matches well with what is being said and written about De Wever in the media. But at the same time, he is offering the media on a golden plate the narrative that he wishes them to produce: Will he remain a Cicero, become a Caesar, or will a third figure intervene? In the year of the bimillenary of Augustus, De Wever celebrated him as 'the founder of Western civilization'. Although he had refrained from using Augustus as a figure of self-identification before, Augustus's *modus operandi* comes close to his own approach of dismantling the Belgian welfare state, he claimed in an op-ed dedicated entirely to Augustus: 'Different from Julius Caesar, who operated like a true revolutionary and ended up dead after 23 knife cuts, Augustus was a man who realized that real, enduring change can only come about by evolution.'⁴⁵ De Wever clearly elaborates upon the tradition of the historical parallel, which he deploys to shape his media image. These classical references are effective in that they are distinctive – few politicians would dare to use Latin sayings during entertainment shows on national television – but also sufficiently familiar and helpfully concise so that journalists, opinion makers and opponents are invited to play the game of classicizing public discourse with him. The risk of being satirized is less harmful than the fact that the classical reference is being repeated elsewhere, as it helps to

reassert the function – and the celebration – of the classical tradition in his conservative agenda to safeguard the costly fabric of society.

Importantly, the classical reference also enables him to connect with other European conservatives. Boris Johnson, from 2008 to 2016 the mayor of London, also drew parallels with ancient Rome in his book and BBC television series *The Dream of Rome* (2006). When De Wever announced his candidacy for the mayor of Antwerp, he made a promotional visit to London, reading Johnson's book in the airplane.⁴⁶ It attracted media attention, despite the significant differences between their respective views. For Johnson, unlike De Wever, nationalism is (was?) a fundamental threat to the EU,⁴⁷ comparable to the rebellion of local tribes against Rome. He also does not share De Wever's admiration for Augustus.⁴⁸ An important point of convergence, however, is their reception of the Roman conception of citizenship: 'The cornerstone of Rome's success was their citizenship ... which was granted to non-Romans if they showed the ambition to be part of the club.'⁴⁹ Whereas Johnson blames the EU for its failure to have a similar appeal to migrants, De Wever insists on the migrant's ambition to integrate. Both concur that the welfare state is no guarantee of good citizenship and has even proven to foster the opposite. That is why they advise leaving behind this model, as Rome succeeded in achieving a multicultural society without it.⁵⁰ One can certainly question the historical correctness of these arguments, but what matters here is that both politicians try to represent ancient Rome as a non-leftist society (in twenty-first-century terms), where social services and state interventions were kept to a minimum. This construction of Rome as a non-leftist benchmark state has been facilitated by the apparent rejection of the classical tradition by left-wing politicians. A salient example of this is the way in which Johnson in his book ironically expresses his gratitude to Charles Clarke, back then Britain's Secretary of State for Education in the Labour government, who had publicly declared the study of classics expendable.⁵¹ This, Johnson claims, had been the initial impulse behind the book, and look: its effect was that student numbers rose again.⁵² In a similar fashion, De Wever performed his concern for the fate of classics in Flanders. When, in 2012, the socialist Minister of Education Pascal Smet first suggested reforming secondary education in such a way that the status of classical languages would be minimized, De Wever immediately reacted with an emotional live interview on national television:

Every child has its own talents ... I came from a worker's family and I am extremely grateful to my parents that they sent me to high school [in Flemish: 'college'], that I was allowed to study

Latin and Greek, and that they have kicked out [i.e. developed by imposing discipline] that talent, not with fun education, everybody doing whatever they like, but with very challenging classes, which I loathed towards the end, I loathed college and now I take pride in sending my own kids there. I would love to see all Flemish children receive the same opportunities as I had.⁵³

Education forms a crucial part of De Wever's community of values. The Catholic institution of the 'college', which is a specific type of elite school in Belgium, funded but not entirely controlled by the state, facilitates and safeguards the transmission of the Christian and classical traditions mentioned above. Yet, De Wever's reaction does not put an emphasis on the content of this transmission but on its nature: by means of a certain violence, this 'college' creates a specific type of human being, somebody whose individual whims have been disciplined by a generalist classical education. In celebrating this type of education, De Wever clearly displays how he himself embodies the values of his Latin mottos: diligence, constancy, discipline, pride, virtue, all in favour of the community.

Like with Fortuyn, the paradox is that De Wever as an individual dominates the communication strategy of his party. Rather than collectively and publicly professing Flemish emancipation and celebrating the heritage of the Flemish Movement (which is not entirely unproblematic, given their collaboration with the German aggressor during both the First and Second World Wars mentioned above), it is the charismatic personality of De Wever that stands at the heart of the party's success. He cleverly uses the tensions underlying the contested classical repertoire, which render him politically incorrect because untimely, elitist, intellectual, masculine and nostalgic for the days that secondary education was still called 'humaniora'. It gives him the outlook of a recalcitrant politician with a vision based on lived historical knowledge, drawing a stark contrast with the politician-manager who is temporarily managing the welfare state. On a more personal level, the classical references seem to legitimize the exceptional life of a top politician, through parallels with Great Romans. Yet, De Wever never forgets to stress that his classical education is a sign not of his social but his spiritual elitism: thanks to his classical education, he became a *homo novus*, working upwards from the working class to one of the leading politicians in Belgium. A Cicero, after all?

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to outline three main perspectives on how

classical references have become a part of the public debate as it is being conducted by conservative, usually populist and nationalist, politicians in our current media age. In their discourse, the political question of cultural and national identity appears to outweigh more global economic, ecological and social concerns, which are much more oriented towards the future. It should be noted here that the use of 'retrotopia' (Bauman) is not only characteristic of conservative populists: most of them have been subject to the infamous *reductio ad Hitlerum* more than once, or have been negatively compared with Roman autocrats. The critical legacy of the Holocaust, including the aversion for nationalism, Eurocentrism and authoritative masculinity, constitutes a crucial part of the traumatic history of modern conservatism. In the case of De Wever, it is telling that his party is still haunted by the Flemish collaboration with Nazi Germany, which also played a role in the schism of the *Volksunie* between left and right, in 2001. For him and many other populist conservatives, it is payback time. One strategy is to wage a memory war, in which contested pasts, values and collective identities are being reclaimed. Interestingly, conservatives' references to the Roman Empire can be regarded as such an instance of 'competitive memory'⁵⁴: replacing the French Revolution as the touchstone for understanding modern history with ancient Rome, which used to have that status before the French Revolution.⁵⁵ Conservatism has an ambivalent relationship with the French Revolution: on the one hand, the legacy of the Enlightenment positively defines European culture, when distinguished from the perceived obscurantism of non-Western cultures; on the other, the Revolution is criticized for having fundamentally disrupted the continuity of Western traditions and hollowed out spiritual life, which is why contemporary Western societies are in decline. Ernest Laclau has called this populist strategy 'the discursive production of emptiness',⁵⁶ for which conservative populists offer a retrotopia as remedy. It is at this point that the classical becomes part of their rhetoric: it is value laden (it still has cultural prestige but this prestige has been contested by leftists, which makes it distinctive again and thus anti-leftist), flexible (appropriated by so many others before), aesthetical (tapping into people's sensibility for harmony and familiarity in times of cultural change and hybridization), transhistorical (stressing continuity) and therefore surprisingly mediatic for those politicians who wish to stress their spiritual aristocracy. It remains to be seen at what cost.

NOTES

Chapter 1

- 1 John Donne (ed. J. Carey), *The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 116.
- 2 Cf. (among many other examples) 'The Classics Aren't Dead, or Irrelevant', Wai Chee Dimock, *New York Times*, 31 August 2015.
- 3 Cf. 'Classicist Receives Death Threats from Alt-Right over Art Historical Essay', *Artforum*, 15 June 2017. Available online: <https://www.artforum.com/news/id=68963> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 4 'Charlottesville Crash Suspect James Fields Brandished Shield for Vanguard America Hate Group before Attack', *New York Daily News*, 13 August 2017. Available online: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/charlottesville-suspect-held-hate-group-shield-attack-article-1.3407245> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 5 'What the Alternative Right Is', *Vox Popoli*, 24 August 2016. Available online: <https://voxday.blogspot.co.uk/2016/08/what-alt-right-is.html> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 6 Cf. also 'Nietzsche the Visionary', *Alternative Right*, 15 October 2014. Available online: <https://alternative-right.blogspot.com/2014/10/nietzsche-visionary.html> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 7 Chapter 12, 172.
- 8 Public Statement from the SCS Board of Directors, 28 November 2016. Available online: <https://classicalstudies.org/scs-news/public-statement-scs-board-directors> (accessed 1 January 2018).
- 9 D. Zuckerberg, 'How to Be a Good Classicist under a Bad Emperor', *Eidolon*, 21 November 2016. Available online: <https://eidolon.pub/how-to-be-a-good-classicist-under-a-bad-emperor-6b848df6e54a> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 10 D. Grant, 'The Classics and White Supremacy: A Response to Donna Zuckerberg', *Social Matter*, 20 December 2016. Available online: <http://www.socialmatter.net/2016/12/20/classics-white-supremacy-response-donna-zuckerberg/> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 11 Chapter 2, 14.
- 12 K. Scott, 'Mussolini and the Roman Empire', *The Classical Journal* 27.9 (June 1932): 647–657.
- 13 Chapter 8, 114.

- 14 Cf. B. Goff (ed.), *Classics and Colonialism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005); M. Bradley (ed.), *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); P. Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- 15 See the project website at www.classicsandclass.info (accessed 10 January 2018), and H. Stead and E. Hall (eds), *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
- 16 Cf. R. Wyles and E. Hall (eds), *Women Classical Scholars: Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jacqueline de Romilly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); I. Hurst, *Victorian Women Writers and the Classics: The Feminine of Homer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); J. Ingleheart (ed.), *Ancient Rome and the Construction of Western Homosexual Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 17 Cf. Y. Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); M. Leonard, *Tragic Modernities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); J. Billings, 'Hyperion's Symposium: An Erotics of Reception', *Classical Receptions Journal* 2.1 (2010): 4–24. Needless to say, the references here and in the preceding notes make no claim to comprehensiveness; they are simply intended to illustrate the scope of a broad ongoing debate in the field.
- 18 Chapter 2, 14.
- 19 Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1898), Part II, Chapter VII, 138.
- 20 Chapter 9, 115.
- 21 E. Hall, 'Putting the Class into Classical Reception', in *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Stray (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 386–397.
- 22 Chapter 10, 136.
- 23 Chapter 10, 136.
- 24 Chapter 10, 138.
- 25 Chapter 7, 89.
- 26 Chapter 7, 99.
- 27 Hurst, *Victorian Women Writers*, 2.
- 28 Chapter 3, 26.
- 29 Chapter 6, 86.
- 30 See above, note 3.
- 31 G. Zarkadakis, 'Modern Greece's Real Problem? Ancient Greece', *Washington Post*, 4 November 2011. Available online: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/modern-greeces-real-problem-ancient-greece/2011/11/01/gIQACSq9mM_story.html (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 32 Chapter 4, 35.
- 33 Chapter 8, 101.
- 34 Chapter 2, 13.
- 35 Chapter 10, 142.
- 36 Chapter 8, 106.
- 37 This is Klause's formulation – and is acknowledged with thanks.
- 38 Chapter 8, 102.

- 39 'A Journey Back to Egypt', *New York Times*, 25 October 2003. Available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/25/us/a-journey-back-to-egypt-for-a-mummy-thought-to-be-a-pharaoh.html> (accessed 10 January 2018).
- 40 Chapter 3, 25.
- 41 Chapter 6, 72.
- 42 Cf. E. Richardson, 'Mr Masson and the Lost Cities', *Classical Reception Journal* 5.1 (2013): 84–105.
- 43 Billings, 'Hyperion's Symposium', 19.
- 44 Chapter 6, 82.
- 45 Chapter 8, 114.
- 46 Chapter 11, 158.
- 47 Chapter 2, 24.
- 48 B. G. Niebuhr (trans. L. Schmitz), *Lectures on Ancient History* (London: Taylor, Walton & Maberly, 1852), 228.
- 49 Chapter 2, 19.
- 50 D. Garrick, *Lethe* (London: Paul Vaillant, 1749), 4.
- 51 Garrick, *Lethe*, 13.
- 52 This is Sinha's formulation: A. Sinha, 'Forgetting to Remember: From Benjamin to Blanchot', *Colloquy* 10 (2005): 36.
- 53 S. Dixon and D. I. Watson, 'Per Tot Discrimina Rerum: Classical Pedagogy by/for Urban Students Experiencing Crisis and Poverty', abstract for 'Classics in Extremis' conference, 2014.
- 54 C. Martindale, *Redeeming the Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xiii.
- 55 For instance, in a review of Goldhill's *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*, Jenkyns asserted that the meaning of the work under discussion was beyond doubt, but Goldhill had somehow missed it: 'Goldhill often reminds me of Inspector Lestrade in the Sherlock Holmes stories: the evidence is in front of his eyes but he misses it. Surely it is obvious what has happened?' (R. Jenkyns, 'Lestrade's Victorians', *Arion* 20.1 (2012): 185).
- 56 Martindale, *Redeeming*, 48.
- 57 Martindale, *Redeeming*, 45.
- 58 Martindale, *Redeeming*, 63.
- 59 Martindale, *Redeeming*, 45. Dante's taste happens to dovetail neatly with Martindale's own: 'Dante might well have been baffled by criticisms of Lucan's "bad taste" and amazed at our neglect of his poem' (Martindale, *Redeeming*, 69).
- 60 H. R. Jauss (trans. M. Hays), *Question and Answer* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 222.
- 61 See also Martindale, *Redeeming*, 40, on Parry's Virgil: 'To privilege a couple of lines in an epic of approximately 10,000 as a sort of key to the whole is a revealing index of the critic's "taste".' Martindale himself, however, takes exactly the same approach a few pages later (Martindale, *Redeeming*, 49).
- 62 Martindale, *Redeeming*, xiv.
- 63 Chapter 11, 157.
- 64 Chapter 11, 169–170.

Chapter 2

- 1 S. Matzner, 'From Uranians to Homosexuals: Philhellenism, Greek Homoeroticism and Gay Emancipation in Germany 1835–1915', *Classical Receptions Journal* 2.1 (2010): 60. Matzner explores this model in the context of German cultural history and attitudes to sexual orientation.
- 2 For analysis of the association between vindictory narratives and liberal 'progressive' thought in intellectual history, see C. Prendergast, 'The Price of the Modern: Walter Benjamin and the Counterfactuals', in *Tradition, Translation, Trauma: The Classic and the Modern*, ed. J. Parker and T. Mathews (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 143–153. For a brief assessment of ways in which classical receptions can both support and challenge vindictory narratives (concerning the First World War), see L. Hardwick, 'The Poetics of Cultural memory: World War One Receptions of Ancient Peace' *Classical Receptions Journal*, Special Issue: Classical Receptions and the First World War (forthcoming).
- 3 E. Hall, 'Introduction: Why Greek Tragedy in the Late Twentieth Century?' in *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. E. Hall, F. Macintosh and A. Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1.
- 4 Hall, 'Why Greek Tragedy', 7, 18, 44.
- 5 L. Hardwick, 'Greek Drama and Anti-Colonialism: Decolonising Classics', in *Dionysus since 69*, ed. Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley, 242.
- 6 H. Lamers and B. Reitz-Joosse, *The Codex Fori Mussolini: A Latin Text of Italian Fascism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
- 7 H. Roche, *Sparta's German Children: The Ideal of Ancient Sparta in the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, 1818–1920, and in National Socialist Elite Schools (the Napolas), 1933–1945* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2013); H. Roche, *A History of the Napolas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); H. Roche and K. Demetriou (ed.), *Brill's Companion to the Classics: Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Brill's Companion to Classical Reception 12) (Leiden: Brill, 2017). K. Fleming, 'Use and Abuse of Antiquity: The Politics and Morality of Appropriation', in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, ed. C. Martindale and R. F. Thomas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 127–137, broadens the discussion into political and ethical aspects and the philosophies of appropriation.
- 8 G. Van Steen, *Stage of Emergency: Theater and Public Performance under the Greek Military Dictatorship of 1967–1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 9 H. Stead and E. Hall (eds), *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
- 10 T. Jenkins, *Antiquity Now: The Classical World in the Contemporary American Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- 11 L. Hardwick, *Translating Words, Translating Cultures* (London: Duckworth, 2000); S. J. Harrison, *Victorian Horace: Classics and Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); H. Stead, *A Cockney Catullus: The Reception of Catullus in Romantic Britain, 1795–1821* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 12 F. M. Turner, 'Why the Greeks and not the Romans in Victorian Britain?' in

Rediscovering Hellenism, ed. G. W. Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 61–81; N. Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

- 13 For an indication of the range of genres, contexts and themes see Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley, *Dionysus since 69*; K. Harloe and N. Morley (eds), *Thucydides and the Modern World: Reception, Reinterpretation and Influence from the Renaissance to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Harrison, *Victorian Horace*; E. Mee and H. Foley (eds), *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Stead, *Cockney Catullus*.
- 14 In his study of how ‘close reading becomes distant reading’, Peter Middleton has discussed how poetry as a cultural practice is always situated in specific sites of performance – recited on stage, displayed on the page, scrolled on a computer screen (P. Middleton, *Distant Reading: Performance, Readership and Consumption in Contemporary Poetry* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005)). It is a central tenet of my discussion here that in the adaptation, performance and re-reading of ancient poetry, including theatre poetry, the immediate sites also insinuate into the modern experience contexts, voices and silences from the ancient. The memories that are created in that symbiosis offer new perspectives for both the modern and the ancient.
- 15 Harrison, *Victorian Horace*, 1.
- 16 P. Bourdieu (trans. R. Nice), ‘The Forms of Capital’, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241–258 (English translation by R. Nice of original publication in German, 1983).
- 17 Bourdieu does not explicitly discuss the role of classical material in the formulation of his concept.
- 18 Although, as the essays in Stead and Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics* show, knowledge of antiquity and its deployment for entertainment and debate was by no means confined to the educated elite.
- 19 See C. Kerr Prince, ‘Poeta sovrano? Horizons of Homer in Twentieth-Century English – Language Poetry’, *The Homerizon: Conceptual Interrogations in Homeric Studies*, Washington Center for Hellenic Studies. Available online: <https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/1323> (accessed 14 August 2017). Prince discusses changing perceptions of Homer in contemporary culture and relevant theorization (including Baudrillard). Modern fiction encapsulates and drives some of these shifts (e.g. M. Miller, *The Song of Achilles* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), on which the judges of the Orange Prize for 2012 commented [dust jacket]: ‘Terrific. The Trojan Wars and the legendary love story of Patroclus and Achilles told with all the intensity and accuracy [*sic*] that this world of violence, superstition and romance deserves.’)
- 20 To give just one example, in the UK a considerable proportion of leading politicians from all the main parties have read for a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (at Oxford known as ‘Modern Greats’ to distinguish it from ‘Greats’, i.e. Classics).
- 21 P. Michelakis, *Greek Tragedy on Screen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); M. M. Winkler (ed.), *Troy: From Homer’s Iliad to Hollywood Epic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); A. Wrigley, *Greece on Air: Engagements with Ancient Greece on BBC Radio, 1920s–1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 22 L. Hardwick, ‘Greek Drama and Anti-Colonialism: Decolonising Classics’, in

- Dionysus* since 69, ed. Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley: 242; L. Hardwick, 'Greek Drama and Theatre for the Oppressed', in *Receptions of Antiquity*, ed. J. Nelis (Gent: Academia Press, 2011), 81–91; Mee and Foley, *Antigone*.
- 23 E. Hall, 'Ancient Greek Responses to Suffering: Thinking with Philoctetes', in *Receptions of Antiquity*, ed. Nelis, 161–168; P. Meineck, "'These Are Men Whose Minds the Dead Have Ravished": Theatre of War. The Philoctetes Project', *Arion* 17.1 (2009): 173–192.
 - 24 The extent to which this kind of project may intentionally or unintentionally serve to validate and re-inscribe in modern consciousness the values of war and gender represented in the ancient texts is not my concern here.
 - 25 E. Sawyer, 'Thucydides in Modern Political Rhetoric', in *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides*, ed. C. Lee and N. Morley (Malden, MA, Oxford and Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 529–547. At the time of writing in the UK, the Conservative MPs Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg use classical allusions and tags inside and outside the Houses of Parliament in order to create and project their images.
 - 26 L. Hardwick and C. Gillespie (eds), *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.
 - 27 Harloe and Morley, *Thucydides and the Modern World*; A. Stradis, 'Thucydides in the Staff College', in *Reception of Thucydides*, ed. Lee and Morley, 425–445; H. R. Rawlings, 'Why We Need to Read Thucydides – Even When "We" Are Only a Few', in *Reception of Thucydides*, ed. Lee and Morley, 558.
 - 28 D. Tziovas, 'Between Tradition and Appropriation: Mythical Method and Politics in the Poetry of George Seferis and Yannis Ritsos', *Classical Receptions Journal* 9.3 (2017): 373, n. 43 draws attention to the danger that allegorical assumptions of continuity between past and present can imply an essentialist concept of human nature and behaviour patterns.
 - 29 Mee and Foley, *Antigone*.
 - 30 E. Fischer-Lichte, *Tragedy's Endurance: Performances of Greek Tragedies and Cultural Identity in Germany since 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 189.
 - 31 There are further philosophical debates about the extent to which fear for oneself or one's family mitigates guilt and complicity, and also about what precisely constitutes ignorance or denial of what was happening.
 - 32 Fischer-Lichte, *Tragedy's Endurance*, 193. Fischer-Lichte's analysis is also grounded in her work on the transformative powers of performance (E. Fischer-Lichte, 'Performance as Event – Reception as Transformation', in *Theorising Performance: Greek Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. E. Hall and S. Harrop (London: Duckworth, 2010), 29–42.).
 - 33 The tragedies were Euripides's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in Schiller's version; *The Trojan Women* (Sartre's version); Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. The comedy, which concluded the evening, was Aristophanes's *The Acharnians*.
 - 34 Fischer-Lichte, *Tragedy's Endurance*, 328.
 - 35 For further discussion of this, see L. Hardwick, 'Translating Myths, Translating Fictions', in *Ancient Greek Myth in World Fiction since 1989*, ed. J. McConnell and E. Hall (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 75–90.
 - 36 A. M. Seider, *Memory in Vergil's Aeneid: Creating the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–27 discusses the ancient and modern terminology and

- the scholarship in the field. K. Galinsky, *Memory in Ancient Rome and Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) includes a substantial section on the neurosciences of memory. See also the bibliography being developed in the *Cognitive Classics* project hosted by the Institute of Classical Studies in London. E. Minchin, 'Voice and Voices: Homer and the Stewardship of Memory', in *Voice and Voices in Antiquity – Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World*, ed. N. W. Slater (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 11–30 addresses ways in which memory is 'seeded' in the forms and language of the Homeric poems.
- 37 E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
 - 38 Discussed in relation to epic poetry and modern media in Emily Greenwood, 'Multimodal Twentieth-Century Bards: From Live Performance to Audiobook in the Homeric Adaptations of Simon Armitage and Alice Oswald', in *Epic in Performance*, ed. Fiona Macintosh and Justine McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Greenwood draws on the insights of Peter Middleton, 'How to Read a Reading of a Written Poem', *Oral Tradition* 20.1 (2005): 7–34. Middleton pointed out how in a span of 11 Whitbread Prize for Poetry awards (1990–2000) winners included classically orientated work by Michael Longley, Tony Harrison, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes. Harrison won the award in 1992 for *Gaze of the Gorgon*. See further L. Hardwick, 'Myth, Creativity and Repression in Modern Literature: Refigurations from Ancient Greek Myth', *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Special Issue, *The Eternal Return Myth: Updating in Contemporary Literature*, ed. A. Gonzalez-Rivas and J. M. Losada (forthcoming).
 - 39 A. Chesterman, 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies', *Hermes* 42 (2009): 13–22.
 - 40 J. Balmer, *Piecing Together the Fragments: Translating Classical Verse, Creating Contemporary Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 233.
 - 41 J. Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) refines the theme in his chapter on the content and impact of Aeschylus's play *The Persians*.
 - 42 R. Girard (trans. P. Gregory), *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 2.
 - 43 A. Oswald, *Memorial* (London: Faber, 2011), 2.
 - 44 E. Wilson (trans.), *The Odyssey of Homer* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2017), 1.294–300.
 - 45 R. S. Miola, 'Representing Orestes' Revenge', *Classical Receptions Journal* 9.1 (2017): 144–147.
 - 46 Atwood, *Penelopiad*, 78.
 - 47 Atwood, *Penelopiad*, 82.
 - 48 Atwood, *Penelopiad*, 78.
 - 49 Wilson, *Odyssey*, 91, 52.
 - 50 P. Oswald, *Odysseus: Based on Homer's Iliad and Odyssey* (London: Oberon Books, 1999).
 - 51 D. Walcott, *The Odyssey: A Stage Version* (London: Faber, 1993), scene vi, 153, 155.
 - 52 For more detailed discussion of the play text and staged performances, see L. Hardwick, 'Singing across the Faultlines: Cultural Shifts in Twentieth-Century

- Receptions of Homer', in *Homer in the Twentieth Century: Between World Literature and the Western Canon*, ed. B. Graziosi and E. Greenwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 62–66.
- 53 D. Walcott, *What the Twilight Says* (London: Faber, 1998), 36–64, at 35.
 - 54 See M. Quest, 'Direct Democracy and the Search for Identity for Colonised People: The Contemporary Meanings of C. L. R. James' Classical Athens', *Classical Receptions Journal* 9.2 (2017): 238, for discussion of how 'for complicated reasons, decolonising the field of Classics is no easy task'. L. Langerwerf, 'Universal Slave Revolts: C. L. R. James' Use of Classical Literature in *The Black Jacobin*', in *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, ed. E. Hall, R. Alston and J. McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 353–384, analyses an example of the positive use of classical material by C. L. R. James in his account of black revolutionary action in Haiti in 1804.
 - 55 Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1990) Chapter XXV–XXVIII.
 - 56 Chapter XLI of the poem is specific in its connection between slavery in antiquity and the American South (Walcott, *Omeros*, 206–207).
 - 57 Seider, *Memory*, 1–4.
 - 58 Walcott, *Omeros*, 139.
 - 59 Published text Y. Farber, *Molara* (London: Oberon Books, 2008).
 - 60 For detailed discussion of this aspect, see B. Van Zyl Smit, 'Orestes and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission', *Classical Receptions Journal* 2.1 (2010): 114–135, which analyses four South African adaptations of Greek tragedies that deal with the House of Atreus.
 - 61 Y. Farber, *Theatre as Witness – Three Testimonial Plays from South Africa* (London: Oberon Books, 2008).
 - 62 Van Zyl Smit, 'Orestes', 125–129.
 - 63 For detailed discussion of the staging and especially of the role of the Chorus of actors and musicians from the Ngqoko Cultural Group, see L. Hardwick, 'Negotiating Translation for the Stage', in *Theorising Performance*, ed. Hall and Harrop, 200–203.
 - 64 C. Tóibín, *House of Names* (London: Penguin/Viking, 2017), 162.
 - 65 Preston's phrasing echoes Alice Oswald's insistence on *enargeia*, the 'bright unbearable reality' of the *Iliad* (Oswald, *Memorial*, 1).
 - 66 Tóibín, *House of Names*, 262.
 - 67 D. Quint, 'Repetition and Ideology in the Aeneid', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 24 (1989): 28.
 - 68 The symbol of the child resonates with Seamus Heaney's allusion to Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* in his own 'Bann Valley Eclogue' which celebrates the birth of his granddaughter. F. Macintosh, Review. 'House of Names: A Greek House of Cards', *Irish Times*, 20 May 2017, points to 'the obvious thematic parallels between Ireland's history and Aeschylus' tragedy of revenge and retribution', drawing an analogy with Heaney's strategies of poetic reconciliation in his 'Mycenae Lookout' (1996). See also L. Hardwick, 'Voices of Trauma: Remaking Aeschylus in the Twentieth century', in *The Reception of Aeschylus' Plays through Shifting Models and Frontiers*, ed. S. E. Constantinidis (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 280–303.
 - 69 G. W. Most, 'Memory and Forgetting in the Aeneid', *Vergilius* 47 (2001): 162.

Chapter 3

- 1 See Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996) for a fuller biography of Behn.
- 2 For a discussion both of early modern education for women and for Behn's paraphrase of Ovid (probably on the basis of pre-existing translations), see Tracy Walters, 'Challenging Hierarchies. Aphra Behn's Authentication through Classical Translation', *Translation Review* 64.1 (2002): 12–24. For Behn's translations of other Latin works see Alison Martin, "'No Tincture of Learning?': Aphra Behn as (Re)Writer and Translator", UCL Translation in History Lectures, 24 October 2013. Available online: <http://www.cnmd.ac.uk/translation-studies/translation-in-history/documents/Martin-Aphra-Behn-pdf> (accessed 1 September 2017).
- 3 Aphra Behn, 'To the Unknown Daphnis on His Excellent Translation of Lucretius', in *T. Lucretius Carus: The Epicurean Philosopher His Six Books Done into English, with Notes* (Oxford: Anthony Stephens, 1683).
- 4 Cf. Deborah Uman, *Women as Translators in Early Modern England* (Newark, DE: The University of Delaware Press, 2012), 106; See also M. L. Stapleton, *Admired and Understood: The Poetry of Aphra Behn* (Newark, NJ: The University of Delaware Press, 2004), 92.
- 5 Alan Snider suggests (Alan Snider, 'Atoms and Seeds: Aphra Behn's Lucretius', *Clio* 33.1 (2003): 14) that the reference could be to Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*, but I see no textual evidence for such a claim. It is probable that Behn is also engaged with the Daphnis who appears in Milton's *Lycidas*, a figure with his own Virgilian pedigree.
- 6 This is not to claim that Theocritus was not adapting an older tradition (as it is entirely possible that he was). However, what exactly his source texts might have been is difficult to discern. See Kathryn Gutzwiller, *Theocritus' Pastoral Analogies: The Formation of a Genre* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 95, for an assessment. Certainly in the early modern period, Theocritus was viewed as the founder of the pastoral tradition (and Virgil its brilliant adaptor).
- 7 There are numerous discussions of Virgil's debts to Epicurus and to Lucretius: cf., for example, William Berg, *Early Virgil* (London: Althone Press, 1974); Susanna Braund, 'Virgil and the Cosmos: Religious and Philosophical Ideas', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 204–221; Brian Breed, 'Imitations of Originality: Theocritus and Lucretius at the Start of the *Eclogues*', *Vergilius* 46 (2000): 3–20.
- 8 D. A. Kidd, 'Imitation in the Tenth Eclogue', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 11 (1964): 55; G. Davis, *Parthenope, the Interplay of Ideas in Vergilian Bucolic* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 84.
- 9 Ros Ballaster makes a similar point (Ros Ballaster, 'Taking Liberties: Revisiting Behn's Libertinism', *Women's Writing*, 19.2 (2012): 169).
- 10 Karel Vanhaesebrouck and Pol Dehert, 'Introduction: Libertine Bodies or the Politics of Baroque Corporeality', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 12.2 (2012): 2–3.
- 11 For Aphra Behn's complex relationship with English libertines and libertinism see Stapleton and Ballaster, 'Taking Liberties'. Ballaster argues (171) particularly strongly that Behn was somewhat disappointed with the libertines' failure to really embody their ideals.

- 12 I print here the ‘undisturb’d’ of the 1684 edition (Behn’s own), an obvious correction of the 1683 ‘disturb’d.’
- 13 Jeremy Webster, *Performing Libertinism in Charles II’s Court: Politics, Drama, Sexuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3.
- 14 Tomlinson notes that while reason is initially described as a gentle ‘figure of Eros’, it is described in line 58 as that which ‘pierces, conquers and compels’. Tomlinson argues that this description would remind the reader of the ‘potent, ravishing lover’ heroized by the libertines (Sophie Tomlinson, “‘A Woman’s Reason’: Aphra Behn Reads Lucretius”, *Intellectual History Review* 22.3 (2012): 365).
- 15 James William Johnson, *A Profane Wit: The Life of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004): 117; Vanhaesebrouck and Dehert, ‘Libertine Bodies’, 8. Kirk Combe has shown that Rochester’s interest in cross-dressing was philosophically motivated and was a result of his failure to accept essentializing notions of gender (Kirk Combe, ‘Making Monkeys of Important Men: Performance Satire and Rochester’s *Alexander Bendo’s Brochure*’, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 12.2 (2012): 61).
- 16 Behn seems to have preferred the libertine method herself: Aphra Behn, *Miscellany: Being a Collection of Poems by Several Hands. Together with Reflections on Morality, or Seneca Unmasked* (London: Printed for J. Hindmarsh, 1685), 302–303. Cf. Line Cottagegnies, ‘Aphra Behn’s French Translations’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, ed. Derek Hughes and Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 225.
- 17 Richard Kroll, *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 88.
- 18 Quoted in Julie Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity & Culture in France and England 1600–1800* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 74.
- 19 Quoted in Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity*, 74.
- 20 Lucretius, of course, had already done this first. He translated Epicurean and Democritean philosophy into Latin epic poetry.
- 21 Laura Linker points out that some thinkers of the period, Dryden among them, refuted the notion that libertines achieved *ataraxia* as a result of their sexual freedom on the grounds that they practised what Lucretius terms ‘kinetic pleasure, which gratifies the body but often disturbs the spirit’ (Laura Linker, *Dangerous Women, Libertine Epicures, and the Rise of Sensibility 1670–1730* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 14). The libertines, I presume, begged to differ. What they found attractive about Epicureanism (and Hobbesian materialism, which they often confused with the former) was the idea that sex was merely a mechanical experience, shared between bodies ‘composed of free floating, constantly moving atoms’ (Linker, *Dangerous Women*, 4). Sex could therefore be divorced from its biblical associations.
- 22 As early as 1628, William Prynne ‘unleashe[d] one of his many attacks against the “gluttony, ryot, luxurie, Drunkenness, Epicurisme, Health-drinking, idlenesse, chambering, wantonnesse, vnlawful plesures, games, and carnall merriments” running amuck at court’ (quoted in Reid Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 54). The libertines themselves were primarily aristocrats. Stapleton notes that ‘the libertine is an elitist, a member of an aristocratic counterculture who rebels against “the rules of upper class civility even though it is precisely those rules that give [him] license to be uncivil”’ (Stapleton, *Admired and*

Understood, 124).

- 23 Barbour, *English Epictures*, 54.
- 24 The original line appeared in a subsequent 1684 printing of a collection of Behn's poetry. See the 'Variants' on 29 of the *Works of Aphra Behn Volume 1* (Janet Todd (ed.), *The Works of Aphra Behn: Volume I: Poetry* (Columbus, OH: State University Press, 1992)). See Tomlinson, 'Woman's Reason', 368 and Ballaster, 'Taking Liberties', 171–172 for discussions about Behn's contradictory attitudes towards religious faith in the poem.
- 25 The text of all quotations from the *Eclogues* is from Robert Coleman (ed.), *Vergil: Eclogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.
- 26 Frederick Jones, *Virgil's Garden: The Nature of Bucolic Space* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 139.
- 27 Gregson Davis acknowledges the bucolic character of certain episodes in Lucretius's work, so the connection between bucolic and Epicurean spaces is not unparalleled (Davis, *Parthenope*, 133).
- 28 Suzanne Mizera, 'Lucretian Elements in Menalcas' Song', *Hermes* 110 (1982): 367; Thomas K. Hubbard, 'Intertextual Hermeneutics in Vergil's Fourth and Fifth *Eclogues*', *The Classical Journal* 91.1 (1995): 19; Davis, *Parthenope*, 91–92.
- 29 See Monica Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 14, for an assessment of Epicurus's views of the matter.
- 30 Modern theorists of translation have come to similar conclusions. Cf. John Sallis, 'The End of Translation', in *Translating the Classics: Identity as Change in the History of Culture*, ed. Alexandra Lianeri and Vanda Zajko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58; Mizera, "Lucretian Elements", 370.
- 31 The text of all quotations from Lucretius's *De rerum natura* is from W. H. D. Rouse (trans.) and M. F. Smith (ed.), *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).
- 32 Michel Serres, *The Birth of Physics*, trans. J. Hawkes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 141.
- 33 Michael Lipka, *Language in Vergil's Eclogues* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 67. The texts of Theocritus's *Idylls* are from Richard Hunter (ed.), *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 34 The text of this quotation from the *Odyssey* comes from W. B. Stanford (ed.), *Homer: Odyssey I–XII* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1959).
- 35 Brian Breed, 'Time and Textuality in the *Eclogues*', in *Brill's Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral*, eds Marco Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter (Leiden: Brill, 2006): 361–362.
- 36 Margaret Doody sees this phenomenon in relation to growing scepticism about religious texts (Margaret Doody, 'Gender, Literature, and Gendering Literature in the Restoration', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650–1740*, ed. Steven Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 74). Julie Hayes argues that translators also couched their project in biblical terms: '[Translation] lent itself to a pervasive malaise concerning the state of language, the sense among many that language had failed in its communicative function or its ability to sustain truth: the Babel effect' (Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity*, 95–96). Perhaps Behn's anti-religious sentiments and her choice to cast the translator of Lucretius as a kind of libertine are related.

- 37 In Latin: 'quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis/multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,/cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necessest/confiteare et re et sonitu distare sonanti./ tantum elementa queunt permutato ordine solo/at rerum quae sunt primordia, plura adhibere /possunt unde queant variae res quaeque creari.'
- 38 Jonathan Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 125.
- 39 Goldberg, *Seeds of Things*, 150. Jonathan Swift satirizes the atomic view of language in *Gulliver's Travels*, III.V. The satire points to the fact that this theory of language was known and attended to.
- 40 Kroll, *Material Word*, 87.
- 41 Thomas Creech, *T. Lucretius Carus: The Epicurean Philosopher His Six Books Done into English, with Notes* (Oxford: Anthony Stephens, 1682), 2.
- 42 Thomas Creech, *T. Lucretius Carus: The Epicurean Philosopher His Six Books Done into English, with Notes, The Second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged* (Oxford: Anthony Stephens, 1683), 6.
- 43 For more on the preface and Creech's political reasons for disavowing Epicurean thought see David Norbrook, 'Atheists and Republicans', in *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, ed. David Norbrook, Stephen Harrison and Philip Hardie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 248–250 and David Butterfield, 'Lucretius in the Early Modern Period', in *Lucretius*, ed. Norbrook, Harrison and Hardie, 65. Butterfield points out that Creech may have become more sympathetic to Epicurean doctrine towards the end of his life and that he had quite a reputation as a womanizer (Butterfield, 'Lucretius', 66–67).
- 44 Most scholars point out that Dryden's translation of *De rerum natura* is a much less 'faithful' translation of Lucretius's text than Creech's. Thomas Mayo writes: 'Creech had a strong feeling of obligation to his original. In the preface of his translation of Horace, he was later to take the "admirable Cowley" to task for arguing "against all strict and faithful Versions"' (Thomas Mayo, *Epicurus in England 1650–1725* (Dallas: The Southwest Press, 1934), 72). This is hardly a statement of a libertine translation aesthetic. Dryden, on the other hand, as Judith Sloman points out, 'omits everything Lucretius says – a considerable amount – about the perception of beauty; he omits the concept of "swerve," and he leaves out the genuine philosophy, like the distinction between primary and secondary qualities' so that he could highlight the negative qualities of Epicurean thought (Judith Sloman, *Dryden: The Poetics of Translation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 95). Aphra Behn, therefore, presents us with a Daphnis who does not quite match up with the 'reality' of Thomas Creech.
- 45 Strangely, the first commendatory poem in the collection (sometimes attributed to John Dryden) lauds Creech precisely for the faithfulness of his translation: 'We read and find *Lucretius* all along' (Creech, *Lucretius: Second Edition*, 22). See James Winn, "'Dryden's Epistle before Creech's Lucretius': A Study in Restoration Ghostwriting", *Philological Quarterly* 71.1 (1992): 47–68, for the attribution of this anonymous poem to the publisher.
- 46 In fact, Bill Overton suggests that it was Behn herself who was fond of libertine translation (Bill Overton, 'From French Verse to English: Behn's Version of Tallemant's *Le Voyage de L'isle d'amour*', *Women's Writing* 22.1 (2015): 59–60).
- 47 Stephen Dobranski summarizes the conclusions of much recent scholarship on this point (Stephen Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11).

- 48 Goldberg, *Seeds of Things*, 142, 145.
- 49 Margaret Doody, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 80.
- 50 Snider, 'Atoms', 19.
- 51 Tomlinson suggests that these lines are reminiscent of female authors' traditional apologies for the quality of their writing and may well be disingenuous. In any case, Tomlinson sees them as a statement of Behn's uniqueness as a contributor to the series of commendatory poems (Tomlinson, 'Woman's Reason', 362).
- 52 In fact, most libertines were vulnerable to such feminization (or at least emasculation). The poetry of Rochester, for instance, addresses the fear of sexual impotence (e.g. in 'The Imperfect Enjoyment'). Behn plays with a similar theme in her poem 'The Disappointment'.
- 53 Uman reads this stanza as Behn's alignment with male poets against her illiterate female compatriots (Uman, *Women as Translators*, 107).
- 54 Sloman notes of Dryden's translation of the *Eclogues* and *Idylls*: 'the world of pastoral or scholarly retreat, which is ultimately symbolized by translation itself ... here implies an escape to Greek or Latin poetry' (Sloman, *Dryden*, 63).
- 55 In addition to those passages I have already discussed, Behn includes a compressed Lucretian cosmogony beginning with the line 'Ere gods be worshiped' (36 ff.). Like Lucretius, Behn asserts that men grew 'Gentler' with the passage of time (Lucretius asserts that men were once *durius* at 5.925), and like Lucretius, imagines a time before religion.
- 56 Cf. Tomlinson, 'Woman's Reason', 363.
- 57 Emphasizing the importance of the English language was common among male poets of the period. In his *Essay on Dramatick Poesie* Dryden honours English writers and protects them from the 'censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them' (David Kramer, *The Imperial Dryden: The Poetics of Appropriation in Seventeenth Century England* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 34).
- 58 Quoted in Uman, *Women as Translators*, 29. Line Cottagegnies has demonstrated that Behn made interventions in her preface to the translation of Fontenelle's treatise that are reminiscent of her productive misreading in the poem to Creech (Line Cottagegnies, 'The Translator as Critic: Aphra Behn's Translation of Fontenelle's "Discovery of New Worlds" (1688)', *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 27.1 (2003): 23-38).
- 59 Kramer, *Imperial Dryden*, 4.

Chapter 4

- 1 With thanks to I. Carras, J. Elsner, C. Meyer, L. Navari, V. Petrakos, R. Pitt and D. Ricks. I gave versions of this paper at the Ashmolean Research Seminar in February 2016 and at the University of Heidelberg, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, in June 2016, and I am grateful for the responses I received. My thanks to R. R. Smith and N. Dietrich for the invitations. All errors are mine. All translations of texts from Greek and German into English are my own.
- 2 B. Anderson, "'An Alternative Discourse': Local Interpreters of Antiquities in the Ottoman Empire', *Journal of Field Archaeology* 40.4 (2015): 450-460; Y. Hamilakis, 'Decolonizing Greek Archaeology,' in *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology*

- and *Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece*, ed. D. Damaskos and D. Plantzos (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008), 273–284.
- 3 S. L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); D. Challis, *From the Harpy Tomb to the Wonders of Ephesus: British Archaeologists in the Ottoman Empire 1840–1880* (London: Duckworth, 2008); È. Gran-Aymerich, *Naissance de l'Archéologie Moderne, 1798–1945* (Paris: CNRS, 1998), 23–137. On inscriptions see N. Papazarkadas, 'Epigraphy in Early Modern Greece', *Journal of the History of Collections* 26.3 (2014): 399–412. On vases see A. Zambon, 'Fauvel et les vases grecs', *Journal des savants* 2.1 (2006): 3–63.
 - 4 See V. Ch. Petrakos, *Hēmerologio archaiologiko ta chronia tou Kapodistria 1828–1832* (3 vols.) (Athens: Hē en Athēnais Archaiologikē Hetaireia, 2015) for the publication of an important part of this archival material.
 - 5 (1) E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece: During the Years 1801, 1805, and 1806* (2 vols.) (London: Rodwell & Martin, 1819); (2) T. Burgon, 'An Attempt to Point out the Vases of Greece Proper Which Belong to the Heroic and Homeric Ages', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature Series* 2.2 (1847): 258–296; (3) E. D. Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa; Part the Second: Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1816–1824); (4) A. Blouet et al. (eds), *Expédition Scientifique de Morée ordonnée par le Gouvernement Français: Architecture, sculptures, inscriptions, et vues du Péloponèse, des Cyclades et de l'Attique* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1832–1835).
 - 6 On formal Ottoman policies see W. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2003). Examples of Ottoman Turkish engagements with antiquities: Veli Pasha (1773–1822), son of Ali Pasha and governor of Peloponnese 1806–12, of Albanian origin but high up in the Ottoman hierarchy, conducted excavations at the Tomb of Atreus at Mycenae c. 1810 and at Loukou; but the finds mentioned do not include ceramics. See Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 310 (Mycenae); 183 (statue of a female moved from Bochori (Euenochorion) to Naupactus under Veli Pasha) and 233 (Loukou).
 - 7 See E. Özsunay, 'Protection of Cultural Heritage in Turkish Private Law', *International Journal of Cultural Property* 6.2 (1997): 278–290, and S. Özel, 'Under the Turkish Blanket Legislation: The Recovery of Cultural Property Removed from Turkey', *International Journal of Legal Information* 38.2 (2010): 177–184.
 - 8 For example, Thomas Roe (1581–1644), English ambassador to the Ottoman court at Istanbul, attempted to remove ancient reliefs built into the Golden Gate but could not persuade the imam to support him; see Anderson 'Alternative Discourse', 453, and Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 1–13.
 - 9 M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: University Press, 1997) and E. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1991). This is particularly the case for E. D. Clarke.
 - 10 Burgon, 'Vases', 288.
 - 11 E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece: During the Years 1801, 1805, and 1806* (vol. 2) (London: Rodwell & Martin, 1819), 197.
 - 12 Clarke, *Travels* (vol. 6), 407.
 - 13 J. M. Hussey (ed.), *The Journals and Letters of George Finlay* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1995); C. Callmer, *Georg Christian Gropius als Agent, Konsul und Archäologe in Griechenland 1803–1850* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982).
 - 14 For example, G. E. Malouchou and A. P. Matthaïou (eds), *Charin tēs Hellēnikēs eukleias: keimena Kyriakou S. Pittakē 1798-1863* (Athēna: Hellēnikē Epigraphikē

- Hetaireia, 2001), 24, document 12; 33, document 20 (inscriptions in private houses including his own). Dodwell, *Classical Tour* (vol. 1), 372 (inscription 'in a cottage' near the Roman agora in Athens), 380 and 412 (inscriptions in churches).
- 15 See L. Navari, 'Guilford Associations in the Gennadius Library', *The Griffon* 1–2 (1985–1986): 132–144.
 - 16 A. Zambon, *Aux origines de l'archéologie en Grèce: Fauvel et sa method* (Paris, CTHS: Institut national d'histoire de l'art, 2014); C. W. Clairmont, *Fauvel. The First Archaeologist in Athens and His Philhellenic Correspondents* (Zurich: Akanthus, 2007).
 - 17 For example, the painting of Fauvel in his house by Louis Dupré, 1819, showing fragments of ancient sculpture on display.
 - 18 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 49–53, document 28; quotation at 52, Item 12. On the identity of the writer see Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 39–40; he suggests that it was Karpos Papadopoulos (d.1879), a close associate of Odysseas Androutsos (1788–1825).
 - 19 See description by François Pouqueville in L. Beschi, 'La casa di L. S. Fauvel, Primo Museo Ateniese', Ioannou Travlou, 'Sēmēoma dia tēn thesin kai tēn architektonikēn tēs oikias tou Fauvel eis tas Athēnas', *Archaiologikē Ephēmeris* 140 (2001): 72–128, at 87–93.
 - 20 Aigina functioned as the capital from January 1828 to December 1829.
 - 21 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 70–71, 77–78; V. Petrakos 'Historia tēs Hellenikēs Archaiologias. To prōto mouseio tēs Hellados', *Enēmerotikon Deltion tēs Archaiologikēs Hetaireias* 16 (1991): 90–98; M. Kardamitsē-Adamē, 'To orphanotropheio tēs Aiginas', *Ho Mentōr* 26 (1993): 97–112; A. Kokkou, *Hē merimna gia tis archaiotētēs stēn Hellada kai ta prōta mouseia* (Athens: Kapon, 2009), 61–68.
 - 22 On the architecture see Kardamitsē-Adamē, 'To orphanotropheio', 109–110; M. Birēs and M. Kardamitsē-Adamē, *Neoklassikē Architektonikē stēn Ellada* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 58–62.
 - 23 On Moustoxydēs see A. Kokkou, *Hē merimna gia tis archaiotētēs stēn Hellada kai ta prōta mouseia* (Athēna: Kapon, 2009), 65, n.1; he was the first Greek to become a member of the Instituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica.
 - 24 H. R. Goette and O. Palagia (eds), *Ludwig Ross und Griechenland. Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums, Athen, 2.–3. Oktober 2002*, Internationale Archäologie. Studia honoraria Band 24 (Rahden and Westfalen: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2005).
 - 25 L. Ross, *Erinnerungen und Mittheilungen aus Griechenland* (Berlin: Rudolph Gaertner, 1863), 144–145, letter composed in Athens 6 September / 25 August 1832.
 - 26 On Iatridēs's style see G. Pharmakidēs, 'Athanasios Iatridēs, zōgraphos tou agōnos (1799-1866)', *Deltion tēs Istorikēs kai Ethnologikēs Etaireias tēs Ellados* 19 (1967–1970), 41, 46–48, 54–58; on dating the Botsarēs ink drawings see Pharmakidēs, 'Zōgraphos tou agōnos', 45.
 - 27 L. von Klenze, *Aphoristische Bemerkungen gesammelt auf seiner Reise nach Griechenland* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1838), 166: 'wirklich erschrecklich schlechten'. On von Klenze see Pharmakidēs, 'Zōgraphos tou agōnos', 40.
 - 28 On Moustoxydēs providing ancient pottery as models for local potters see

- Kardamitsē-Adamē, 'To orphanotropheio', 25, and M. Puillon Ballaye, *Description d'Egina précédée d'une notice historique sur le commerce, la navigation et les colonies d'Egina par Ch.-S. Henry La Blanchetais* (Paris: Librairie-Gide, 1835), 67–68.
- 29 Petrakos, 'To prōto mouseio', 96.
 - 30 von Klenze, *Reise*, 166.
 - 31 'Mémoire sur un vase antique, lu à la troisième class de l'institut de France le 8 septembre 1809, par M. Xavier Scrofani, Sicilien, correspondant de la même classe', *Moniteur*, 1 October 1809. A. L. Millin, *Peintures de vases antiques, vulgairement appelés étrusques* (Paris: P. Didot, 1808) (vol. 2), 78–84, planches 55 and 56. Dodwell, *Classical Tour* (vol. 1), 301.
 - 32 Dodwell, *Classical Tour* (vol. 1), 301.
 - 33 On Nikolaos Flogaitēs, see Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 64, n. 7.
 - 34 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 115, document 82.
 - 35 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 115, document 82.
 - 36 On the Mertrud family see M. Korres (ed.), *Hoi prōtoi chartes tēs poleōs tōn Athēnōn* (Athens: Melissa, 2010), 125, n. 19.
 - 37 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 3), 46–47, documents 515 and 516.
 - 38 Birēs and Kardamitsē-Adamē, *Neoklassikē Architektonikē*, 63, fig. 82.
 - 39 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 171–172, document 122.
 - 40 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 91.
 - 41 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 176–177, document 129.
 - 42 Dodwell, *Classical Tour* (vol. 2), 196.
 - 43 Dodwell, *Classical Tour* (vol. 2), 197.
 - 44 On Jewish communities in Greece see A. Machaira and L. Papastefanaki (eds), *Evrαιkes Koinotētes anamesa se Anatolē kai Dysē, 15^os-20^os aiōnas: Oikonomia, Koinonia, Politiki, Politismos* (Iōannina: Isnafi, 2016); K. E. Fleming, *Greece. A Jewish History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 15–20.
 - 45 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 9, document 4. On Koraēs see P. M. Kitromilidēs (ed.), *Adamantios Korais and the European Enlightenment* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010).
 - 46 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 317–320, document 274: Section 1 (citizens must declare what antiquities they have in their homes, including vases); Section 11 (antiquities including vases may not be moved).
 - 47 Relics: for example, Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 103–104, document 70, at 103, 'προγονικά μας λείψανα', letter from Kyriakos Pittakys (1798–1863) to the newspaper *Genikē Ephēmeris* no. 38, 30 March 1827, 152.
 - 48 Entrails: for example, Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 67–68, document 44, at 67, 'τὰς [ἀρχαιοτάτης] ἀνασκάψῃ ἐκ τῶν σπλάχνων τῆς γῆς', letter from Alexandros Mavrokordatos (1791–1865) to General Bernard E. A. Rottiers in 1825.
 - 49 Denuding and stripping: for example, Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 66–67, document 43, at 67, 'γυμνώνεται ἡ Ἑλλάς', letter of Ioannēs Vasileiou to the governing body in 1825.
 - 50 Leontios Kampanēs's catalogue: see Petrakos *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 338–342; Petrakos *Hēmerologio* (vol. 3), 163–164, document 635; Petrakos *Hēmerologio* (vol. 3), 171, document 639.

- 51 *Genikē Ephēmeris* 13, 18 February 1831, 64.
- 52 Pharmakidēs, 'Zōgraphos tou agōnos', 19, n. 1 (2).
- 53 For example, Comte de Caylus; The Academy of Cortona. See R. Higginson, *A History of the Study of South Italian Black- and Red-Figure Pottery* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 5–28.
- 54 Vol. 1, 78 plates; vol. 2, 85 plates; vol. 3, 99 plates.
- 55 For example, Clarke, *Travels* (vol. 6), 281–282.
- 56 *Ephēmeris Athēnōn* 16, 17 January 1826. Petrakos, *Hēmerologio*, 2, 72–79, document 48, at 75–76.
- 57 I. Makrygiannēs, *Apomnēmoneumata* (Athens: Dorikos, 1992) (vol. 2), 400–401: 'two splendid statues, a woman and a prince, whole – the veins showed; they were that perfect'.
- 58 On Romantic philhellenism see C. Guthenke, *Placing Modern Greece. The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) and Marchand, *Down from Olympus*.
- 59 For example, J. Millingen, 'On a Fictile Vase, Representing the Contest between Hercules and the Acheloüs', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom* 2 (1834): 95–101, in which the iconography of a painted vase found at Agrigento is interpreted by reference to ancient texts ranging from Sophocles through Pausanias to Nonnus. Compare with Kyriakos Pittakys's focus on vase inscriptions below.
- 60 D. Watkin and P. Hewat-Jaboor (eds), *Thomas Hope. Regency Designer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); R. Reilly, *Wedgwood Jasper* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 17–18.
- 61 Clarke, *Travels* (vol. 6), 457.
- 62 See Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 82–83 and *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 115, document 82.
- 63 On Pittakys, see Malouchou and Matthaiou, *Keimena Pittakē*; Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 85–97, and Pharmakidēs, 'Zōgraphos tou agōnos', 23–25.
- 64 *Archaiologikē Ephēmeris* (1852), 681, no. 1129. Black-figured kylix no. 300748, Antikensammlung, Berlin, Schloss Charlottenburg, 3151; J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase Painters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 79. See Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 118–119.
- 65 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 58–60, document 36, at 59, Section 9.
- 66 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 68–69, document 45.
- 67 Dodwell, *Classical Tour* (vol. 1), 407–408.
- 68 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 221–222, document 175.
- 69 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 236–237, document 184. See Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 115, document 82, letter by Nikolaos Flogaitēs suggesting that the future state museum should purchase newly discovered antiquities and those which the possessors would not donate. On the Greek government buying antiquities from local owners see Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 82–83.
- 70 Burgon, 'Vases', 287: 'I myself directed and superintended the excavation.'
- 71 Burgon, 'Vases', 290.
- 72 Burgon, 'Vases', 288.
- 73 Burgon, 'Vases', 289–290.

- 74 Emphasis added. P. O. Bröndsted, 'On Panathenaic Vases', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* 1.2 (1834): 109, n. 18.
- 75 Burgon, 'Vases', 288, original emphasis.
- 76 Burgon, 'Vases', 288–289.
- 77 Bröndsted, 'Panathenaic Vases', 109, n. 18 (at 111).
- 78 P. E. Corbett, 'The Burgon and Blacas Tombs', *JHS* 80 (1960): 53, in a letter to P. O. Bröndsted.
- 79 Clarke, *Travels* (vol. 6), 458–460.
- 80 Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 2), 458–459, document 407; see Petrakos, *Hēmerologio* (vol. 1), 212.
- 81 M. Blomberg, *Observations on the Dodwell Painter* (Stockholm: Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities, 1983); T. Mannack, *Griechische Vasenmalerei. Eine Einführung* (Theiss: Stuttgart, 2002), 101.

Chapter 5

- 1 Cast of the hand of Daniel Dunglas Home. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/972.
- 2 Harry Houdini, *A Magician among the Spirits* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1924), 49.
- 3 Letter from Baron Seymour Kirkup to D. D. Home, 16 January 1863. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/385.
- 4 Cf. Cathy Gutierrez, *Plato's Ghost: Spiritualism in the American Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46.
- 5 Roger Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9. This chapter's debt to Luckhurst's work is gratefully acknowledged.
- 6 Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse*, 54.
- 7 Matthew Ismail, *Wallis Budge: Magic and Mummies in London and Cairo* (Glasgow: Hardinge Simpole, 2011), 397–398.
- 8 Cf. Shane Butler (ed.), *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
- 9 Cf. Trevor Hamilton, *Immortal Longings: FWH Myers and the Victorian Search for Life after Death* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2009); T. P. Wiseman, *Talking to Virgil: A Miscellany* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992), 199.
- 10 Mrs St. Clair Stobart, *The Either-Or of Spiritualism* (London: Rider and Co., 1928), 19.
- 11 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (London: Cassell & Company, 1870), 235.
- 12 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 238.
- 13 'Animal Magnetism', *The Spiritual Magazine* 3.1 (January 1862): 56. The very next month, another encounter with a ghostly Alexander was reported in the same periodical, when a medium was tested with 'the spirit of Byron, and of Alexander the Great' ('Animal Magnetism', *The Spiritual Magazine* 3.2 (February 1862): 56).
- 14 *Gallery of Spirit Art. An Illustrated Quarterly Magazine*, August 1882: 4 (original

emphasis).

- 15 Sarah Willburn, 'Viewing History and Fantasy through Victorian Spirit Photography', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult*, ed. Sarah Willburn and Tatiana Kontou (London: Routledge, 2016), 362.
- 16 Gutierrez, *Plato's Ghost*, 66.
- 17 James Coates, *Photographing the Invisible* (London: L. N. Fowler, 1911), 98–99.
- 18 *Light*, 4 November 1911: 522.
- 19 British Library, Ghost Club Archives, vol. iv, Add. MSS 52261, minutes of 6 July 1900 meeting.
- 20 British Library, Ghost Club Archives, vol. iv, Add. MSS 52261, minutes of 2 November 1900 meeting.
- 21 Andrew Lang, 'Presidential Address', *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 25 (1911): 64.
- 22 'The Mediumship of Mr Bailey', *Journal of Society for Psychical Research* 12 (1905–1906): 84.
- 23 *Journal of Society for Psychical Research* 12 (1905–1906): 85.
- 24 Letter from Leonard W. King, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, 8 March 1905. Quoted in *Journal of Society for Psychical Research* 12 (1905–1906): 87.
- 25 Letter from E. A. Wallis Budge, British Museum, 14 March 1905. Quoted in *Journal of Society for Psychical Research* 12 (1905–1906): 88.
- 26 Letter from Baron Seymour Kirkup to D. D. Home, 16 January 1863. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/385.
- 27 Daniel Dunglas Home, *Incidents in My Life* (New York: A. J. Davis, 1864), 26.
- 28 *The Saturday Review*, 21 March 1863, quoted in Daniel Dunglas Home, *Incidents in My Life: Second Series* (New York: Holt & Williams, 1872), 24.
- 29 *The Literary Times*, 21 March 1853, quoted in Home, *Second Series*, 37.
- 30 Peter Lamont, *The First Psychic: The Peculiar Mystery of a Notorious Victorian Wizard* (London: Abacus, 2006), 81. This chapter's debt to Lamont's work on Home is gratefully acknowledged.
- 31 Letter from G. Brockelbank to Home, 18 October 1866. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/40.
- 32 Letter from unknown sender (signature torn out in archival copy) to Home, 27 November 1866. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/5.
- 33 Letter from S. D. Carbis to Home, 4 August 1862. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/56.
- 34 Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man* (London: Longman, 1857), 107.
- 35 Letter from Ellen Crookes to Home, 11 January 1876(?). Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/118.
- 36 Home, *Second Series*, 161.
- 37 Cf. *Every Saturday: A Journal of Choice Reading* 3 (1 March 1873): 248.
- 38 Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, *Experiences in Spiritualism with D. D. Home* (Glasgow: Robert Maclehose, 1924), 130–131.

- 39 Home, *Incidents*, 61 (original formatting).
- 40 Home, *Incidents*, 109.
- 41 Letter from John Ashburner to Home, 26 June 1866. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/11.
- 42 Letter from Dr R. Chambers to Home, 7 March 1860. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/63.
- 43 Wyndham-Quin, *Experiences in Spiritualism*, 153.
- 44 Unsigned letter to Home, 12 March 1865. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/44.
- 45 Unsigned letter to Home, 12 March 1865. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/44.
- 46 Letter from Mrs Clark to Home, no date. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/83.
- 47 Joshua Billings, 'Hyperion's Symposium: An Erotics of Reception', *Classical Receptions Journal* 2.1 (2010): 19 (original emphasis).
- 48 Charles Martindale, 'Reception – A New Humanism? Receptivity, Pedagogy, the Transhistorical', *Classical Receptions Journal* 5.2 (2013): 174.
- 49 *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 25 (1911): 64.
- 50 Billings, 'Hyperion's Symposium', 23.
- 51 Home, *Second Series*, 149. Cf. also the account in 'Guardians of Strength', *The Spiritual Magazine*, 1 March 1867: 115.
- 52 Letter from Andrew Jackson Davis to Home, 9 October 1866. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/133.
- 53 Lamont, *The First Psychic*, 172.
- 54 *The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 25 April 1868: 7.
- 55 Browning, quoted in Lamont, *The First Psychic*, 174. For Liddell in the court proceedings cf. *Manchester Times*, 25 April 1868: 5.
- 56 Letter to Home from Anna Maria Hall (no date). Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/243.
- 57 Letter to Home from Dr Gully, 27 June 1868. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS.28/219.
- 58 *Daily News* (London), 23 May 1868: 4.
- 59 *The Times*, 24 June 1886: 9. The article likewise traces the lineage of spiritual misdirection back to the ancient world: 'The tricks of spiritualism were known and practiced by Apollonius of Tyana [...] and were probably handed down to him from adepts of a still more ancient date.'
- 60 *Punch*, 19 November 1864: 207. Home was recognized as an emblematic figure of spiritualism by *Punch* (though rarely in a positive light); cf. *Punch*, 15 October 1864: 161: 'Humbug, or Spiritualism, which has been a little flat since Mr Home ceased to fly.'
- 61 Home, *Incidents*, 161.
- 62 Home, *Incidents*, 162.
- 63 Daniel Dunglas Home, *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism* (London: Virtue & Co., 1878), 2.
- 64 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 30–31.

- 65 Cf. Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 42–43: ‘Vespasian, in the tide of his affairs, began to think that there was nothing so great and wonderful, nothing so improbable or even incredible, which his good fortune could not accomplish. In the presence of a prodigious multitude, all erect with expectation, he advanced with an air of severity, and hazarded the experiment. The paralytic hand recovered its functions, and the blind man saw the light of the sun. By living witnesses who were actually on the spot both events are confirmed at this hour, when deceit and flattery can hope for no reward.’ The passage is based on Tacitus, *Histories* IV.81.
- 66 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 8.
- 67 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 45.
- 68 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 37.
- 69 For instance, on Assyria: ‘The researches of Layard and Smith, indeed, have of late greatly added to our knowledge of this antique race.’ Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 7.
- 70 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 37.
- 71 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 48–49.
- 72 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 50.
- 73 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 192.
- 74 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 11–12.
- 75 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 11.
- 76 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 236. On reincarnations of Alexander, cf. *The Theosophist*, 19.4 (January 1898): 226, where it is argued that Napoleon is the reincarnation of Alexander.
- 77 Home, *Lights and Shadows*, 300.
- 78 Letter from Home to Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall, no date. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/273.
- 79 Letter from Mrs Milner Gibson to Home, no date. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/206.
- 80 Letter from Home to Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, 5 July 1876. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/267.
- 81 Letter from Henry T. Child to Home, 13 February 1876. Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS 28/79.
- 82 Home, *Second Series*, 41.
- 83 F. W. H. Myers, ‘The Subliminal Consciousness’, *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 7 (1891–1892): 326–327.
- 84 In the heyday of spiritualism, Victorians were negotiating ‘what counted as science and, in the process, what did not. And when facts did not fit with existing theories, the line between science and pseudo-science became more blurred’ (Lamont, *The First Psychic*, 116).
- 85 Geraldine Cummins, *The Road to Immortality: Being a Description of the After-Life Purporting to Be Communicated by the Late F. W. H. Myers* (London: L.S.A. Publications, 1947), 177.
- 86 F. C. Constable, ‘Letter to the Editor,’ *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 19 (1919–1920): 62.
- 87 Society for Psychical Research Archive, Cambridge University Library, SPR.MS

Chapter 6

- 1 The full catalogue of photographs can be viewed in the excellent Julian Cox and Colin Ford (eds), *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003).
- 2 For critical essays on Julia Margaret Cameron's illustration of Tennyson, see Marylyn Hill, "'Shadowing Sense at War with Sound": Julia Margaret Cameron's Photographic Illustrations of Idylls of a King', *Victorian Poetry* 40.4 (2002): 445–462; Alison Chapman, 'Photography and Trance in Tennyson and Julia Margaret Cameron', *Victorian Poetry* 41.1 (2003): 47–71. As Stuart Sillars has noted, there is as yet also 'no critical study of the Shakespeare photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron': S. Sillars, *Shakespeare and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 200.
- 3 Earlier versions of this article have been presented to the Faculties of Classics at the Universities of Otago and of Canterbury in New Zealand, to the Literature-Technology-Media Research Group at the University of Cambridge, and at the 'Classics in Extremis' conference at Durham University, and I have duly noted the radically polarized responses of these different audiences (for which I am very grateful) to the pictures shown.
- 4 Charles Hay Cameron, *Two Essays: On the Sublime and the Beautiful and On Duelling* (London: Ibotson and Palmer, 1835).
- 5 Julia Margaret Cameron, 'Annals of My Glass House', in *Julia Margaret Cameron: Her Life and Photographic Work*, ed. Helmut Gernsheim (New York: Aperture, 1975), 180.
- 6 Cameron, 'Annals', 181.
- 7 Unknown photographer, 'Julia Margaret Cameron and Her Sons, Henry and Charles' (about 1858). Wilson Centre for Photography, London. In Cox and Ford (eds), *Julia Margaret Cameron*, 43.
- 8 Cameron, 'Annals', 181.
- 9 Cameron, 'Annals', 181.
- 10 Victoria Olsen, *From Life: Julia Margaret Cameron and Victorian Photography* (London: Aurum Press, 2003), 5.
- 11 H. J. Stack, 'Photography as Fine Art', *Intellectual Observer*, 10 August 1866, 22.
- 12 'Fine Art Gossip', *The Athenaeum*, No. 1916, 16 July 1864: 88.
- 13 'Waifs and Strays: Out of Focus', *British Journal of Photography*, 22 July 1864.
- 14 F. W. Newman, *The Iliad of Homer, Faithfully Translated into Unrhymed English Metre* (London: Walton and Maberly, 1856), xix. On the debate about classical translation in the nineteenth century, and the use of the daguerreotype analogy, see John Talbot, "'The Principle of the Daguerrotype": Translations from the Classics', in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature 1790–1880*, ed. Norman Vance and Jennifer Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 57–78.
- 15 Matthew Arnold, *On Translating Homer: Last Words* (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1862), 6, 17.
- 16 Arnold, *On Translating Homer*, 22.

- 17 Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Mary Russell Mitford, 7 December 1843, in *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Mary Russell Mitford, 1836–1854*, ed. Meredith B. Raymond and Mary Rose Sullivan (3 vols.) (Winfield, KS: Wedgestone Press, 1983) (vol. 3), 357–358.
- 18 On ‘Cupid’s Pencil of Light’ as the allegory of love and light, see Joanne Lukitsh, *Julia Margaret Cameron* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 106.
- 19 See, for example, the portrait taken of Julia Margaret Cameron around 1860 by her brother-in-law, Lord Somers, in which she stands, open book in hand: Gernsheim, *Julia Margaret Cameron*, frontispiece.
- 20 Julia Margaret Cameron to Samuel Gray Ward, 16 June 1869. Houghton Library, Harvard University, BMS Am 1465 [176]. In Cox and Ford (eds), *Julia Margaret Cameron*, 66.
- 21 Julia Margaret Cameron to John Herschel, 20 April 1867. Royal Society, London. HS 5: 166. In Olsen, *From Life*, 201.
- 22 Juliet Hacking, *Princes of Victorian Bohemia: Photographs by David Wilkie Wynfield* (London: Prestel, 2000). For the influence of Wynfield on Cameron, see Olsen, *From Life*, 145–146.
- 23 Colin Ford, ‘Putting on a Show’, in *Julia Margaret Cameron*, ed. Cox and Ford, 32–35.
- 24 Jonah Barish, ‘Antitheatrical Prejudice in the Nineteenth Century’, *University of Toronto Quarterly* XL (1971): 277–299.
- 25 ‘Gossip: Photographic Society of Scotland’, *Photographic Notes*, 15 March 1864: 80.
- 26 Malcolm Daniel, ‘Darkroom v. Greenroom: Victorian Art Photography and Popular Theatrical Entertainment’, *Image* 33 (Fall 1990): 13–19.
- 27 *Journal of the Photographic Society* (21 April 1858): 193.
- 28 On Keats, ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ and the Classical Attitudes, see Jeffrey Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 168–185; Jennifer Wallace, ‘The Younger Romantics: Leigh Hunt, Keats and Shelley’, in *Classical Reception in English Literature*, ed. Vance and Wallace, 427–428.
- 29 For Julia Margaret Cameron’s maternal eye, see Mike Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 1984), 30–31; Nicole Cooley, ‘Ideology and the Portrait: Recovering the “Silent Image of Woman” in the Work of Julia Margaret Cameron’, *Women’s Studies* 24.4 (1995): 369–384; Jeannene M. Przyblyski, ‘Julia Margaret Cameron’s Women, Great Men and Others’, *Afterimage* 27.5 (March–April 2000): 7–9.
- 30 For the ‘smeared’ distinctions between sexual and not-sexual in Cameron’s work, see Carol Mavor, *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 47.
- 31 Jennifer Wallace, ‘“Greek under the Trees”: Classical Reception and Gender’, in *Classical Reception in English Literature*, eds Vance and Wallace, 248–250. For a different interpretation of Hemans’s Hellenism which argues that it is more radical and interrogating than that of Byron, see Noah Comet, *Romantic Hellenism and Women Writers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 68–89.
- 32 See Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 33 Stack, ‘Photography as Fine Art’.

- 34 Cameron commented on Hillier's particular qualities of character and feeling in her 'Annals': 'The very unusual attributes of her character and complexion of mind, if I may so call it, deserves mention in due time, and are the wonder of those whose life is blended with ours as intimate friends of the house': 182.
- 35 John Milton, *Comus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), lines 50–51.
- 36 For the association of Circe with prostitution, see Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 56–57. See also Augusta Webster, 'Circe', in *Portraits* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1870).
- 37 Tennyson, 'Oenone', in *Poems* (London: Edward Moxon, 1833).
- 38 *Balaustion's Adventure*, in *The Poems of Robert Browning*, ed. John Woolford, Daniel Karlin and Joseph Phelan, with additional notes on *Balaustion's Adventure* by Jennifer Wallace (London: Pearson Education, 2012) (vol. IV), 1862–1871.
- 39 Byron, 'Maid of Athens, ere we part' (Athens, 1810). The maid is not called Zoe in the poem, but the phrase Ζωή μου, ὅς ἀγαπῶ is repeated as a refrain. Byron explained in the notes to the poem: 'Romaic expression of tenderness: If I translate it, I shall affront the gentlemen, as it may seem that I supposed they could not; and if I do not, I may affront the ladies. For fear of any misconstruction on the part of the latter, I shall do so, begging the pardon of the learned. It means "My life, I love you!", which sounds very prettily in all languages.'

- 40 Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth Century Photography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 32. Smith's whole chapter, on Cameron and the politics of focus, is fascinating: 24–34.
- 41 'Photographic Exhibition', *Photographic Journal* 9 (15 August 1864): 86.
- 42 'The Dublin Exhibition', *Photographic Journal* 10 (15 August 1865): 126.
- 43 Explanations have ranged from Cameron's faulty camera to the gap between her collodion plates and the filter to her impulsiveness at clicking the shutter before everything was technically ready. She explained it thus: 'My first successes in my out-of-focus pictures were a fluke. That is to say, that when focusing and coming to something which, to my eye, was very beautiful, I stopped there instead of screwing on the lens to the more definite focus which all other photographers insist upon': Cameron, 'Annals', 181.
- 44 Julia Margaret Cameron to Herschel, 31 December 1864. Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. In *The Cameron Collection: An Album of Photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron*, ed. Colin Ford (London: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1975), 141.
- 45 'Fine Arts: Exhibition of the Photographic Society': 23 November 1867.
- 46 Charles Couzens, 'George Frederick Watts' (1849), oil on canvas, Watts Gallery, Compton (no. 501).
- 47 Cox and Ford (eds), *Julia Margaret Cameron*, 28.
- 48 Peter Wollen, 'Fire and Ice', *Photographies* 4 (1984): 118–120; Christian Metz, 'Photography and Fetish', *October* 34 (Fall 1985): 84.
- 49 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 27, 36. See also Mavor, *Pleasures Taken*, 4.
- 50 'Photography as a Fine Art', 22.
- 51 'Fine Arts: Art in Photography', *Illustrated London News*, 15 July 1865.
- 52 For Elizabeth Barrett Browning's awkward reception of antiquity, see Jennifer Wallace, 'Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Knowing Greek', *Essays in Criticism* 50.4 (2000): 329–353.
- 53 For critical accounts of female approaches to classical antiquity in the nineteenth century, see Wallace, 'Elizabeth Barrett Browning'; Isobel Hurst, *Victorian Women Writers and the Classics: The Feminine of Homer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Shanyn Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism: Women Writers, Ancient Greece and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (Ohio, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008); Noah Comet, *Romantic Hellenism and Women Writers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Wallace, 'Greek under the Trees', 243–278; Yopie Prins, *Ladies' Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

Chapter 7

- 1 All references to, and quotations from, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* are to the 2013 edition, which is based on a facsimile of the c. 1891 copy at the British Library (for which, see P. Mendes, *Clandestine Erotic Fiction in English, 1800–1930: A Bibliographical Study* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), 214–216): *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain, or The Recollections of a Mary-Ann with Short Essays on Sodomy and Tribadism in Two Volumes* (2 vols.) (Richmond, VA: Valancourt Books, [1881] 2013).

- 2 Given that the 'author' of the greatest portion of the novel is represented as a prostitute (and a notorious one, moreover: see above), the work literally constitutes an example of 'pornography', in the etymological sense of 'writing about/ by prostitutes' (for this Greek etymology, acknowledged in many nineteenth century uses of the word, see *OED*); however, this should not be seen as an indication of the profession of the actual writer of the text, but rather a means of facilitating the expression of a wide variety of sexual material, and a knowing allusion to the text's participation in a tradition of pornographic novels written in the voice of a prostitute: cf., for example, the influential *The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* or *Fanny Hill*, published originally in 1748/1749 but republished in English at least thirteen times between 1800 and 1850: (L. S. Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 28).
- 3 *Cities of the Plain*, 5. The term 'pederastic' – despite its classical etymology, referring to 'the love of boys', from the Greek word παῖς (gen. παιδός), 'boy' – looks more generally to same-sex relations: *OED* s.v. 'pederast' reports a parallel usage in the gloss to 'January' in the 1597 *The Shepheards Calendar*: 'He [Socrates] loued ... not Alcybiades person, but hys soule ... And so is pæderastice much to be preferred before gynerastice, that is the loue which enflameth men with lust toward woman kind.'
- 4 *Cities of the Plain*, 81–84, 84–88, 88–89, respectively.
- 5 After opening references to Nero and Caligula (see note 58), the essay headed 'The Same Old Story' concentrates entirely on contemporary practices.
- 6 For example, M. B. Kaplan, 'Who's Afraid of John Saul? Urban Culture and see note 58 the Politics of Desire in Late Victorian London', *GLQ* 5 (1999): n. 61: 'an important document in the history of sexuality'; C. Colligan, "'A Race of Born Pederasts": Sir Richard Burton, Homosexuality, and the Arabs', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 25 (2003): 3: 'arguably the first English work of fiction on homosexual identities and communities'.
- 7 C. Colligan, "'A Race of Born Pederasts": Sir Richard Burton, Homosexuality, and the Arabs', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 25 (2003): 3. Henry Spencer Ashbee's *Catena Librorum Tacendorum* (London, privately printed, 1885), an annotated bibliography of pornography, describes the essays as 'entirely insignificant' (195).
- 8 J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4, n. 3.
- 9 For example, John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (London, privately printed, 1883); *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (London, privately printed, 1896). On these and other Victorian works' reception of classical 'homosexuality', see, for example, J. Ingleheart, 'Introduction: Romeosexuality. Rome, Homosexuality, and Reception', in *Ancient Rome and the Construction of Western Homosexual Identities*, ed. J. Ingleheart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 20–25, 30; J. Funke and R. Langlands, 'The Reception of Rome in English Sexology', in *Ancient Rome*, ed. Ingleheart, 109–125.
- 10 Contrast recent attention to works of classical reception that have more ambiguous links to the pornographic: Ingleheart, 'Introduction', 20–23; D. Orrells, *Sex: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 73–88, on F. C. Forberg, *Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus, ed. et apophoreta adject F.C. Forbergius* (Coburg: n.p., 1824) (Anon. (trans.) New York: Grove Press, 1966).

- 11 For the frequently narrow focus in classical reception studies on cross-cultural encounters between great books and authors, see S. Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 14. For pornography as a genre, see, for example, S. Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (New York: Crowell, 1964), W. Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1987); K. Frederickson, 'Victorian Pornography and the Laws of Genre', *Literature Compass* 8.5 (2011): 304–312.
- 12 I use 'homosexuality' (and related terms) throughout this chapter as a convenient way of avoiding lengthy periphrases in referring to same-sex love and desire; I do not mean to suggest through such usage that there were straightforwardly homosexual people in antiquity, nor to conscript Victorian 'sodomites' into a modern vision of homosexual identity.
- 13 The text under examination itself encodes pornography's stigma: one of Saul's fellow male prostitutes relates how he blackmails a client for possessing the (mostly heterosexually themed) 1873–1876 pornographic novel *The Romance of Lust* (4 vols.) (London, 1873–1876), 65.
- 14 The earliest surviving copy of the text, dated 1881 – although Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 214, suggests that it is actually a reprint of c. 1891 – advertises 'Only 250 copies printed'; P. Fraxi [H. S. Ashbee] *Catena librorum tacendorum: Being Notes Bio-Biblioicono-Graphical and Critical, on Curious and Uncommon Books* (London: privately printed, 1885), 194, suggests that 150 copies of the first edition were printed (this was the usual print run for productions by its publisher, Lazenby: see above and Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 215), albeit the 1881 edition he consulted advertises that it is 'limited to 50 copies'.
- 15 Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 216. The novel still has a homosexual cachet: it was reprinted as *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* [sic] by Masquerade Books in 1992, albeit in a pirated version, which caters to contemporary gay readers by transforming all heterosexual encounters into homosexual ones: see Kaplan, 'Who's Afraid', 290, on how modern gay pornography is not as queer as the 'polymorphous pansexuality and gender fuck' of the Victorian original.
- 16 In absolute terms, then, our text did not reach many readers (although it will surely, like other pornographic works, have been read by more than those who purchased a copy, as men often share pornography with friends). This poses a problem for classical reception studies, which does not yet have a fully theorized model for analysing the influence of works which circulate clandestinely among small groups.
- 17 For the historical Jack Saul, who identified himself as a 'professional sodomite' in the witness stand, see Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 215, Kaplan, 'Who's Afraid', M. B. Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames. Sex, Love, and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 97–98 (also for useful comments on the connection between the Boulton-Park case and our novel). There is no reason to believe that the character in our novel is identical with the historical Saul, pace P. J. Kearney, *A History of Erotic Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 112.
- 18 Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 3–7.
- 19 C. Hirsch, 'Notice Bibliographique Extraite Des Notes et Souvenirs D'un Vieux Bibliopole', in *Teleny: Étude Physiologique, Traduit de l'anglais sur le manuscrit original révisé par l'auteur*, ed. Anon. (Paris: privately printed, 1934), 6.
- 20 Price: Fraxi [Ashbee], *Librorum tacendorum*, 194. On prices and consumers of Victorian pornography, Sigel, *Governing Pleasures*, 87–88. One very prosaic

- explanation for the Roman material's presence in our text is that it is padding, which helps to fill out two volumes, and so justify its price.
- 21 'Memoranda from Mr P –', *The Pearl* 3 (November 1880): 187–192. See Kearney, *Erotic Literature*, 109–122 on Reddie; Kearney sees possible confirmation of the identification of the 'Mr Reddie' of the story in the *Pearl* with the author of our text in the fact that Reddie died in 1878: Lazenby, the publisher of both texts, would not have exposed Reddie to any danger in posthumously revealing his sexual predilections.
 - 22 Contrast our text's opening: Mr Cambon, approaching Saul on the streets with an invitation to 'a cigar and a chat', responds to Saul's challenging 'Why do you seem so afraid to say what you want?' thus: 'I'm not at all delicate; but *wish to keep myself out of trouble*. Who can tell who hears you out in the street?' (4, emphasis added).
 - 23 'Memoranda from Mr P –', 187–188, 191–192.
 - 24 'Fraxi' [Ashbee], *Librorum tacendorum*, xlvii, iii.
 - 25 Our author's deep knowledge of Latin is indicated in his translation of Caligula's *commercio mutui stupri* (Suet., *Cal.*, 36) as 'mutual prostitutions'; the only English translator of Suetonius before our text translates thus: 'reciprocally comerce in mutual impunity' (P. Holland, *The historie of twelve Caesars, emperours of Rome* (London, 1606), 139). The essay apparently mistranslates, misleadingly aligning Caligula with the tales of prostitution in the novel proper. Yet there is more to this translation: the author may bring out the etymological link of *commercium* to *meretrix* (literally 'a woman who earns', from the verb *mereo*), a common Latin word for 'prostitute' (J. N. Adams, 'Words for "prostitute" in Latin', *RhM* 126 (1983): 324–327). On this phrase as suggesting the double degradation (to the Roman mind) of being penetrated by someone who has also been penetrated, see R. Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 355.
 - 26 Cf. in our text 'Mr Inslip – a rather suggestive name, you will think, considering the practices of the members of his club' (*Cities of the Plain*, 32; the club is a male brothel); 'Mr Horner' (52); 'These are my regular chums, who call themselves Mr Wirein, Mr Cold Cream, and the Hon. Mr Comeagain. You will, of course, find their names and pedigrees in Debrett if you care to look them up' (57–58).
 - 27 'Memoranda from Mr P –', 188.
 - 28 Our text may not have had a sole author: *The Romance of Lust* (1873–1876) and *The Power of Mesmerism* (1880) were written 'round-robin' (Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 4–5), as was (allegedly) the later homosexual novel *Teleny* (Hirsch, 'Notice', 7).
 - 29 'The Same Old Story' observes 'Just as this is going to press there is a case in the London *Daily Telegraph* of July 9, 1881' (*Cities of the Plain*, 82); N. Bartlett, *Who Was That Man?: A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1998), 104 reprints this newspaper article.
 - 30 Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 216. This is an issue to which I will return.
 - 31 Kearney speculates that Lazenby wrote the essays (P. J. Kearney, Blogpost. Available online: <https://graduabile.com/2013/04/15/victorian-pornography-part-vi-jack-saul/> [last accessed 4 July 2016]); according to 'Fraxi' [Ashbee], *Librorum tacendorum*, 402–403, who notes that it 'is from the pen of its publisher', Lazenby was the author of the novel marketed as the 'sequel' to our text: the 1883 *Letters from Laura and Eveline*.
 - 32 Reddie and Lazenby were both part of the pornographic subculture, and may

have gained at least some of their knowledge of the Roman texts that feature in the essays through modern pornographic publications; see further above.

- 33 *Cities of the Plain*, 7.
- 34 The text 'does not conform to modernist canons of literary unity ... The structure breaks down ... as Saul interpolates the stories of others he meets along the way' (Kaplan, 'Who's Afraid', 284).
- 35 *Cities of the Plain*, 45, 63.
- 36 The name 'Cambon' as given to the 'writer of these notes' might hint at the name of the extratextual author of the work as a whole: Mendes, *Erotic Fiction*, 215–216, suggests that 'Cambon' conflates elements of the names of putative authors Reddie (who liked to be known as 'James Campbell': Kearney, *Erotic Literature*, 109) and Simeon Solomon (see above), or of Lazenby's pseudonym, 'D. Cameron', and 'Solomon'. It could, alternatively, allude to collaboration between Reddie and 'Cameron'.
- 37 Kaplan, 'Who's Afraid', 284 describes the essays as 'tacked on with no connection to the picaresque narrative', underestimating the many connections I outline above.
- 38 For example, G. Nisbet, "'Dickus Maximus': Roman as Pornotopia", in *Classics for All: Reworking Antiquity in Mass Culture*, ed. D. Lowe and K. Shahabudin (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 150–171; A. J. L. Blanshard, *Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
- 39 J. Ingleheart, 'Putting the Roman Back into Romance: The Subversive Case of the Anonymous *Teleny*', in *Ancient Rome*, ed. Ingleheart, 144–160, especially 152–153.
- 40 Goldhill, *Victorian Culture*, 4–5.
- 41 *Cities of the Plain*, 3, 5.
- 42 Ingleheart, 'Roman Back into Romance'.
- 43 Is 'etc.' an-erotic, suggesting that desire and the particulars of Saul's equipment are commonplace and uninteresting? Or a 'come-on', appealing to the reader's imagination about what 'et cetera' might encompass? Cf., for example, Ovid's *cetera quis nescit?*, 'who does not know the rest?', in which *cetera* which sums up a sex scene at *Amores* 1.5.25.
- 44 *Cities of the Plain*, 3–4.
- 45 The phrasing 'the real and naked truth' (while applied here with specific reference to Saul's large appendage) eroticizes with its sexualized vocabulary ('naked') more generally the notion of putative real-life accounts such as Saul's recollections.
- 46 On desire and discourse, and the imperative (particularly in 'scandalous' literature) to put the sexual into words, and how such discourse 'was meant to yield multiple effects of displacement, intensification, reorientation, and modification of desire itself', see M. Foucault (trans. R. Hurley), *The History of Sexuality I: The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1998), 20–23 (quotation at 23). Foucault, somewhat naively treating the Victorian pornographic text *My Secret Life* as an autobiographical account, which 'repeated, prolonged, and stimulated' (23) the writer's activities, makes a point of obvious relevance to our novel; in overlooking the possibility of fictionality in pornographic writings, Foucault underestimates the power of the imagination in sexual discourse.
- 47 On the *Index* and the Bohn translation of Martial, see C. A. Williams, 'Too Gross

- for Our Present Notions of Propriety: Roman Homosexuality in Two Nineteenth-Century Translations of Martial's *Epigrams*', in *Ancient Rome*, ed. Ingleheart, 288–306. Reddie was involved in the *Index*'s publication: in a letter tipped into the British Library copy of the *Index*, he describes the work's genesis at a dinner party, when 'one of the company who did not know Latin was lamenting' the lack of an English translation of Martial.
- 48 For the alignment of ancient with modern sexual practices and terminology, see, for example, the *Index*'s translation of *paedica* at Mart. 1.92.14 as 'sodomise'; [George Augustus Sala et al.], *The Index Expurgatorius of Martial, Literally Translated, Comprising All the Epigrams Hitherto Omitted by English Translations, to Which Is Added an Original Metrical Version and Copious Explanatory Notes* (London, 1868), 6, and its glossing of 11.78.11's *ergo Suburanae tironem trade magistrae* as 'Go to a Haymarket prostitute' (109).
- 49 The quotations I provide in this chapter from the *Index* give a fair illustration of its pseudo-scholarly tone, which often leaves the reader in doubt as to whether the researches of its authors were carried out in books – or the boudoir. Compare Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 59; Sigel, *Governing Pleasures*, 60–63; D. Heath, *Purifying Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 43, on scholarship and Victorian pornography.
- 50 Sigel, *Governing Pleasures*, 56, notes that the price of the *Index* and the fact that it was not openly displayed in bookshops marked it out as a work of pornography.
- 51 The boundaries between pornography and serious scholarly works were confused in the Victorian age by the laws on obscenity (which meant that some scholarly works could only find a publisher who normally put out pornographic texts) and by some pornographic texts marketing themselves as scholarly: D. Lutz, *Pleasure Bound: Victorian Sex Rebels and the New Eroticism* (New York and London: Norton, 2011), 245.
- 52 *Cities of the Plain*, 10.
- 53 For repetition in pornography, see, for example, Sigel, *Governing Pleasures*, 94–95. Despite new combinations and twists, the most famous Victorian pornographic narrative, *My Secret Life* (11 vols.) (London, privately printed, 1880), ran to eleven, inevitably repetitive volumes, even as there is also a clear narrative/erotic impulse towards ever more inventive couplings; cf. above, and V. Nabokov, 'On a Book Entitled *Lolita*', in *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel Jr. (London: Penguin, 2000), 313, on the 'crescendo' in matters sexual that pornography must provide.
- 54 *Cities of the Plain*, 22, 81.
- 55 Kaplan, 'Who's Afraid', 286–287.
- 56 I am grateful to Simon Goldhill for the suggestion that the essays' 'scholarly' approach parodies the use of antiquity in intellectually respectable contemporary writings, such as the survey of the history of prostitution, which looks back to ancient Greece and Rome, and serves as an introduction to Mayhew's treatment of prostitution in London (H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (London: Charles Griffin and Co, 1861/1862) (vol. 4), 35–54).
- 57 For example, *Cities of the Plain*, at 34, 38, 55–56, 56–62.
- 58 'The Same Old Story' opens: 'Since Nero had his mother, and Caligula fucked his horse, I believe that incest, sodomy, and bestiality have been fashionable vices' (*Cities of the Plain*, 81). The reputation of the emperors for sexual excesses (not just homosexual conduct) can be attributed at least partly to Suetonius's gossip

- biographies: see, for example, A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 88–92, C. Vout, ‘Biography’, in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. T. Hubbard (Malden, MA, Oxford and Chichester: Blackwell, 2014).
- 59 Ingleheart, ‘Introduction’, 8. Aristophanes alludes to the effects of anal sex, such as widening of the anus of the receptive partner (εὐρυπρωκτία) and breaking wind, at, for example, *Eq.* 638–42 or *Nu.* 1083–04; cf. J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* (2nd ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 209–212.
- 60 For example, ‘Sapphic tastes’; ‘Then I got some medical books and some French books, and under Lesbos, Tribade &c. and some other words, got the key to the full mysteries of Sappho and the Lesbians, which added a mite more to my knowledge and admiration of the wonders of the article called cunt’ (*My Secret Life*, 6.11; 8.8); ‘Every means of procuring sensual pleasure that Sapphonism [*sic*] could teach’ (*The Power of Mesmerism: A Highly Erotic Narrative of Voluptuous Facts and Fancies* (‘Moscow’, 1891), 59); ‘When Sappho loved a fair being of her own sex even to madness’ ([James Campbell Reddie], *The Amatory Experiences of a Surgeon* (London, 1881), 22).
- 61 However, despite its Greek etymology, the word seems to have appeared in *Latin* before Greek texts (S. Boehringer, ‘Female Homoeroticism’, in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. T. K. Hubbard (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 156). The essay’s use of ‘tribade’ to denote female homosexuality departs from the usual use of this word to reduce female same-sex eroticism to physical acts (M.-J. Bonnet, ‘Sappho, or the Importance of Culture in the Language of Love: Tribade, Lesbienne, Homosexuelle’, in *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. A. Livia and K. Hall (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 152); see further above.
- 62 [George Augustus Sala et al.], *Index Expurgatorius*, 52–53 (*italics original*), commenting on Mart. 7.67.
- 63 For example, the penny pamphlet *The Lives of Boulton and Park. Extraordinary Revelations* (London: George Clarke, 1870), 83: ‘And to those who are thinkers, it is, alas, too evident that the most revolting profligacy of the guilty cities of the plain, or the debauchery of ancient Rome during the days of Messalina and Theodora, could not possibly outvie many of the atrocious phrases of London life as they exist in the nineteenth century.’
- 64 For example, Cat. 16.1, 21.4, 33.7–8. For Catullus’s reputation as representing Roman homosexual grossness, see the Index in Ingleheart (ed.), *Ancient Rome*.
- 65 See Suet. *Iul.* 45, 49, 52.
- 66 See M. Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); H. G. Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 77–78, 87–97.
- 67 Maybe alluding to an expurgated school edition of Martial, which claims that he wrote ‘epigrams bearing most undisguisedly on the fashionable vices’ (F. A. Paley and W. H. Stone, *M. Val. Martialis Epigrammata Selecta: Select Epigrams from Martial with English Notes* (London: G. Bell, 1868), ix).
- 68 The essay gives no explanation of the term ‘Spintriae’, found in Suetonius in connection with Tiberius’s sexual innovations and excesses on Capri: *Tib.* 43 (‘undique conquisti puellarum et exoletorum greges monstrosique concubitus reptatores quos spintrias appellabat triplici serie conexi, in vicem incestarent

coram ipso ut aspectu deficientis libidines excitaret', 'sought out from everywhere gangs of girls and of mature catamites and devisers of monstrous coupling whom he called *spintriae* joined together in triple chains that they might defile each other before him so that he might arouse his declining lusts by the sight'; translation by E. Champlin, 'Sex on Capri', *TAPhA* 141.2 (2011): 324; cf. Suet. *Vit.* 3 on Vitellius being one of the *Spintriae* in his youth; cf. too *Cal.* 16); on the difficulties of this passage, and various interpretations of this word, see Champlin, 'Sex on Capri', 324-7. Maybe the author expected a pornographically literate audience to understand this reference: the *Spintriae* commonly feature in post-classical pornographic representations of group sex: see, for example, B. Talvacchia, 'Classical Paradigms and Renaissance Antiquarianism in Giulio Romano's "I Modi"', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 7 (1997), 81-118, on medals, known as 'spintriae', which featured erotic scenes (often homosexual ones); Forberg, *Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus* devoted a chapter to *Spintriae*, understood as indicating three or more people joined together in a sexual chain: Forberg, *Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus*, 2.178-91.

- 69 The essay does not explore the sexualized topography of the city of Rome, while extensively treating this aspect of London. M. W. Turner, *Backward Glances: Cruising the Queer Streets of New York and London* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), 51 even sees it as a guide to homosexual London; contrast works such as Burton's 'Terminal Essay', which notes (for example) that 'in Rome ... the temples of Isis ... were centres of sodomy' (R. Burton, 'Terminal Essay: D. Pederasty', in *Sexual Heretics*, ed. B. Reade (London: Routledge, 1970), 174) and that 'pathic boys, we learn from Catullus, haunted the public baths' (Burton, 'Terminal Essay', 168; cf. *Cat.* 33).
- 70 Cf. the *Times* editorial of 31 May 1870, as they were committed to trial: 'That there should be in English society an association of young men ... is a thing of which we cannot help being ashamed. We have been accustomed to associate such offences with the sensuous civilization of antiquity, and with the barbarism or demoralization of certain races in our own day. But we were not prepared to find even the suspicion of them attaching to youths of respectable family and position'.
- 71 *Cities of the Plain*, 45-47.
- 72 [George Augustus Sala et al.], *Index Expurgatorius*, 51, translating the variant *uorat* for *dolat* and so emphasizing lesbian cunnilingus rather than the penetration which *dolat* denotes: M. D. Schachter, 'Lesbian Philology in Early Print Commentaries on Juvenal and Martial', in *Ancient Rome*, ed. Ingleheart, 42-43.
- 73 See the extract from the *Index* quoted above, part of a larger passage which polemically disputes the alternative interpretation that Philaenis penetrates boys with a dildo: see above.
- 74 [George Augustus Sala et al.], *Index Expurgatorius*, 4.
- 75 In interpreting Martial 7.67 as referring to a woman with an enlarged clitoris (often seen as evidence of hermaphroditism), the authors of our essay may have drawn on the *Index* (see above), which itself was influenced by Forberg's 1824 *De Figuris Veneris*. Forberg defines tribads as women who use enlarged clitorises to penetrate (Forberg, *Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus*, 2.108-10), citing the two Martial poems discussed above as evidence (2.130-3). Forberg's work claimed to be a scholarly study of ancient writings on sex, but was read as pornography, and indeed may have inspired more generally our text's essays treating classical sex. B. Brooten, *Love between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female*

- Homoeroticism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 50, interprets these passages as referring to enlarged clitorises and penetration as performed by women.
- 76 See Forberg, *Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus*, 2.131 on this (on his view) misinterpretation.
- 77 Cf. the statement that tribadism in Europe is found ‘generally in narrowed sense, rarely taking any form other than mutual frigging’. In contrast with the essay on sodomy, which is silent on love between men, the essay on tribadism allows for love between women.
- 78 For example, *Cities of the Plain*, 6–7, 15, 56.
- 79 ‘Aulum Plautium iuvenem, quem cum ante mortem per vim conspurcasset: “Eat nunc” inquit “mater mea et successorem meum osculetur”, iactans dilectum ab ea et ad spem imperii impulsus’ (Suet. *Nero* 35.4); J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 199 notes that in this context *conspurco* ‘refers to *irrumatio*’, citing A. E. Housman, ‘Corrections and explanations of Martial’, in *Classical Papers*, ed. J. Diggle and F. R. D. Goodyear (3 vols.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) (vol. 2), 733. Adams fails to comment on an important point that Housman recognized: reference to *kissing* indicates Nero’s *oral* violation. Compare the translation by Philemon Holland, whose ironic ‘sweet lips’ demonstrates understanding of Suetonius’s implications of oral defilement: ‘Among whom, A. Plautius a young gentleman was one, whose bodie after he had by force filthily against kind abused before his death: *Let my mother go now quoth he, and kisse my successors sweete lips, giving out, That he was her well beloved dearling and by her set on to hope and gape after the empire*’ (Holland, *Twelve Caesars*, 197).
- 80 As Cocks, *Nameless Offences*, 32, notes, sodomy seems to have had a very precise definition from the time it was first defined in English law by Sir Edward Coke in 1642: it entailed anal penetration, and male–male oral sex was not defined as sodomy, but was nevertheless a crime.
- 81 Nisbet, ‘Pornotopia’, 162 notes that (along with other elements of Roman sexual ideology), the idea of oral sex as contamination ‘runs counter to’ modern ‘genre codes of porn’.
- 82 *My Secret Life*, 10.11. I argue elsewhere for a coded reference to the etymology of the word, as part of a positive approach towards sex between men, in *Teleny*: Ingleheart, ‘Roman Back into Romance’, 155–157.
- 83 W. Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1987), 44.
- 84 *Cities of the Plain*, 86.
- 85 C. A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (2nd rev. edn.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 179–180.
- 86 The wording ‘a delicious *turn* at bottom-fucking’ (see above) *may* – particularly when taken in combination with the ‘reciprocity and versatility’ (Kaplan, ‘Who’s Afraid’, 285) of the novel’s first sexual encounter – imply sexual role-switching and mutual penetration. Such reciprocity is found elsewhere in the novel: cf. *Cities of the Plain*, 33, 40.
- 87 The essay’s misspelling of Vitellius’s name as Vitellus, and Icelus’s as Icelas, might indicate an author lacking a classical education. However, carelessness is typical of pornographic works, written quickly for profit.
- 88 Ingleheart, ‘Introduction’, 13–29.

- 89 Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 91.
- 90 See, for example, the essays in S. Harrison and C. Stray (eds), *Expurgating the Classics: Editing Out in Greek and Latin* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012), and particularly Leary on the Victorian Martial.
- 91 However, this could be seen *not* as the sort of making of common goals that has characterized the modern LGBT movement, but rather as reflecting a pornographic male interest in lesbianism.
- 92 For example, J. A. Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (London: privately printed, 1908 [1883]), 70–71.
- 93 See Ingleheart, ‘Introduction’, 23–28; Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* delineates Roman codes of homosexuality.
- 94 What Rome had to offer to Victorian men who were sexually interested in other men is perhaps not fully explored until our novel’s ‘sequel’, [William Lazenby] *Letters from Laura and Eveline* (London, 1883). There, a ‘scholarly’, ‘historical’ approach to Roman homosexuality was dropped, and the erotic possibilities of Rome are more imaginatively explored by being integrated more fully into the novel. Roman material is foregrounded in the opening sequences in which ‘Laura’ and ‘Eveline’ (the prostitutes Saul and Fred Jones from our novel, with clear allusions to the Boulton and Park scandal) each marry a man. While *Letters from Laura and Eveline* never mentions the Roman precedents for such marriages between men – most famously, those of the emperor Nero (e.g. Suet. *Ner.* 28–29; Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 279–296) – these scenes read as an creative response to ancient accounts of such weddings, which fill in details that these censorious accounts left out and, importantly, insistently *eroticize* the scene of a man marrying another man and its sexual possibilities; compare *Teleny* on marriage to men (see Ingleheart, ‘Roman Back into Romance’, 154–155).

Chapter 8

- 1 I am grateful to Maya Feile Tomes and Daniel Orrells, whose insightful comments improved an earlier version of this chapter. According to A. Díaz Quiñones, ‘Pedro Henríquez Ureña y las tradiciones intelectuales caribeñas’, *Letral* 1 (2008): 64, Henríquez Ureña was ‘the grand architect of the modern conception of Hispanic-American culture’.
- 2 Graeco-Roman classical texts and learning, though present in colonial times in both the justification of the conquest of the Americas and descriptions of the ‘new’ world by the European colonizers (A. Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992) and D. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), were obscured in the intervening centuries, having been mostly available to a few educated elite and typically religious men of Spanish descent (A. Laird, ‘El patrimonio mexicano y la ideología en la cultura clásica del siglo XVI’, in *Actualidad de los clásicos: III congreso de filología y tradición clásicas* ‘Vicentina Antuna’ in memoriam, ed. E. Miranda Cancela and G. Herrera Díaz (La Habana: Editorial UH, 2010), 54–60; A. Laird, ‘Patriotism and the Rise of Latin in Eighteenth-Century New Spain’, *Renaissanceforum* 8 (2012): 231–262). In particular the banishment of the scholarly Jesuit order by the Catholic Church in 1767 from the entire region created a vacuum in European

- classical and Humanist learning in an already fragmented educational system, especially with regard to ancient Greek language and literature (M. Korenjak, *Geschichte der neulateinischen Literatur: vom Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016), 93–94).
- 3 Pedro Henríquez Ureña also lived and worked in Spain and the United States (Minnesota, New York and Washington, DC), where he was similarly immersed in various intellectual and academic groups; see A. Roggiano, *Pedro Henríquez Ureña en los Estados Unidos* (Mexico: Casa Editorial Cultura, 1961).
 - 4 On Borges's classicisms, see L. Jansen, *Borges' Classics: Global Encounters with the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), and Jansen's chapter in this volume.
 - 5 See, for example, R. Andújar, 'Pedro Henríquez Ureña's Hellenism and the American Utopia', in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, ed. A. Laird and N. Miller (New Jersey: Wiley, forthcoming), on Henríquez Ureña's the role of Hellenism in achieving a pan-Latin American utopia, and D. Padilla-Peralta, 'Classical Pasts in Caribbean Presents: The Politics of Reception in Santo Domingo', in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory*, ed. L. Jenco, M. Idris and M. Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), on the intellectual's claims of Santo Domingo as a 'New World Athens'.
 - 6 N. Miller, *Reinventing Modernity in Latin America: Intellectuals Imagine the Future, 1900–1930* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 5. The term 'social imaginary' belongs to C. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
 - 7 P. Henríquez Ureña, *Estudios Mexicanos*, ed. J. L. Martínez (México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004), 266–267; P. Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 6: 1911–1920*, ed. M. Mena (Santo Domingo: Cielonaranja, 2014) (vol. 3), 321.
 - 8 It is an undisputed fact that intellectual and political life in Mexico begins with the *Ateneo*, which played an important role in the Mexican Revolution and in opposing the oppressive government of Porfirio Díaz, cf. A. Roggiano, *Pedro Henríquez Ureña en México* (México: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1989) and F. Curiel, *La revuelta: interpretación del Ateneo de la Juventud, 1906–1929* (México D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998). Prominent *Ateneístas* included Antonio Caso, who became rector of the Mexican National University, José Vasconcelos, who would become the Mexican Secretary of Education and Alfonso Reyes, the future Mexican ambassador to France and Brazil and founder of the prestigious Colegio de México.
 - 9 Henríquez Ureña, *Estudios Mexicanos*, 249–250; P. Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 2: 1899–1910*, ed. M. Mena (Santo Domingo: Cielonaranja, 2014) (vol. 1), 73–74.
 - 10 P. Henríquez Ureña, *Memorias, Diario*, ed. E. Zuleta (Alavarez, Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras, 1989), 140; J. Vasconcelos, *Ulises criollo*, ed. C. Fell (Nanterre, France: ALLCA XX, 2000), 265.
 - 11 D. Méndez, 'Culture and the City: Pedro Henríquez Ureña's New York City', *Camino Real* 3.4 (2011): 143–168.
 - 12 Letter to Alfonso Reyes dated 31 January 1908, in P. Henríquez Ureña and A. Reyes, *Epistolario Íntimo (1906–1946)* (Santo Domingo: Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña, 1981) (vol. 1), 37.
 - 13 P. Henríquez Ureña, *Memorias, Diario*, ed. E. Zuleta (Alavarez, Buenos Aires:

- Academia Argentina de Letras, 1989), 140: 'rara vez llegué a saborearla'. He contrasts his scant knowledge of ancient literature to his grounding in modern (European, North- and South- American) literature.
- 14 His father was a career diplomat and later became president of the Dominican Republic.
 - 15 Henríquez Ureña, *Memorias*, 140. All translations from the Spanish are my own.
 - 16 Henríquez Ureña and Reyes, *Epistolario Íntimo*, 37.
 - 17 A. García Morales, *El Ateneo de México (1906-1914): orígenes de la cultura Mexicana contemporánea* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1992), 92 cites José Vasconcelos on this topic.
 - 18 Cf. C. Martindale, 'Reception – A New Humanism? Receptivity, Pedagogy, the Transhistorical', *Classical Receptions Journal* 5.2 (2013): 174–175.
 - 19 D. Orrells, *Classical Culture and Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 97; see also D. Orrells, 'Pater and Nettleship: A Platonic Education and the Politics of Disciplinarity', in *Pater the Classicist*, ed. C. Martindale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 293–294.
 - 20 J. Rea Spell, 'Mexican Literary Periodicals of the Twentieth Century', *PMLA* 54.3 (1939): 835–852 and A. Pineda Franco, *Geopolíticas de la cultura finisecular en Buenos Aires, París y México: las revistas literarias y el modernismo* (Pittsburgh, PA: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2006), 105–128.
 - 21 García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 95. Pedro Henríquez Ureña would go on to publish the first (and only) Spanish translation of Pater's *Greek Studies*; see below.
 - 22 Reyes's essay 'Las tres Electras del teatro ateniense' (The Three Electras of Athenian Theatre); (A. Reyes, *Cuestiones Estéticas* (Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2012), 35–70), which was dedicated to Henríquez Ureña, offers a reading of Greek tragedy that connects human sufferings with the cosmic forces of nature. See F. Barrenechea, 'Greek Drama in Mexico', in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas*, ed. K. Bosher, F. Macintosh, J. McConnell and P. Rankine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 259.
 - 23 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas* 2, 210–211.
 - 24 The idea of Greece as site of aspiration is most likely indebted to Walter Pater's vision of Greece, which I discuss in the next section, cf. S. Evangelista, *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece: Hellenism, Reception, Gods in Exile* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4: 'Ancient Greece is not a cultural ideal to recreate but rather to "aspire to".'
 - 25 A. Reyes, *Varia, Obras Completas* (Mexico: Col. Letras Mexicanas, 1955) (vol. 1), 325–334. Reyes later translated nine books of the *Iliad* under the title *Aquiles agraviado* (*Aggrieved Achilles*); see L. A. Guichard, 'Notas sobre la versión de la *Iliada* de Alfonso Reyes', *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 52.2 (2004): 409–447.
 - 26 F. Barrenechea, 'At the Feet of the Gods: Myth, Tragedy, and Redemption in Alfonso Reyes's *Ifigenia Cruel*', *Romance Quarterly* 59 (2012): 6–18.
 - 27 C. Fell, *José Vasconcelos: los años del águila, 1920–1925: educación, cultura e iberoamericanismo en el México postrevolucionario* (Mexico D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1989), 464–466; A. Laird, 'The Cosmic Race and a Heap of Broken Images: Mexico's Classical Past and the Modern Creole Imagination', in *Classics and National Cultures*, ed. S. Stephens and P. Vasunia

- (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 175–176.
- 28 See, for example, M. Henríquez Ureña, *Hermano y maestro* (Santo Domingo: Librería dominicana, 1950), 37; A. Reyes, 'Encuentros con Pedro Henríquez Ureña', *Revista Ibero-americana* 41–42 (Enero-Diciembre 1956): 55; Vasconcelos, *Ulises criollo*, 267 and 310.
 - 29 A. Reyes, *Pasado Inmediato y otros ensayos* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1941), 44; also quoted in E. Zuleta Álvarez, *Pedro Henríquez Ureña y su tiempo: vida de un Hispanoamericano universal* (Capital Federal [Buenos Aires]: Catálogos, 1997), 56.
 - 30 Reyes was also given the nickname Euforión; see García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 84 and S. Quintanilla, 'Dioniso en México o cómo leyeron nuestros clásicos a los clásicos griegos', *Historia Mexicana* 51.3 (January–March 2002): 652.
 - 31 Reyes, *Cuestiones Estéticas*, 31.
 - 32 L. Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1994).
 - 33 J. P. Gay, 'De Ulises al hijo pródigo: un proceso de sustitución en la literatura mexicana hacia 1920', *Tropelías. Revista de la Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada* 23 (2015): 382.
 - 34 García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 3. Though the Mexican university did offer some instruction in European and Spanish classical literature prior to independence, the reforms of José María Luis Mora and Valentín de Gómez Farías prioritized the teaching of sciences, with only one professorship devoted to both ancient and modern history; see J. L. Martínez, 'México en busca de su expresión', in *Historia General de México*, ed. B. García Martínez et al. (2nd edn.) (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, 1977) (vol. 3), 300–303.
 - 35 N. Priego, 'Porfirio Díaz, Positivism and "The Scientists": A Reconsideration of the Myth', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* 18.2 (2012): 135–150.
 - 36 Quintanilla, 'Dioniso', 628; N. Miller, *Reinventing Modernity in Latin America: Intellectuals Imagine the Future, 1900–1930* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 113–115; Barrenechea, 'Greek Drama', 258–259; F. Barrenechea, 'Tragic Impostures: Greek Tragedy and Pre-Hispanic Myth in the Theatre of Rodolfo Usigli and Salvador Novo', *Classical Receptions Journal* 8.2 (2016): 195.
 - 37 See, for example, E. Krauze, *Caudillos culturales en la Revolución Mexicana* (México D.F.: Tusquets, 1999). It is worth noting that many of the accounts about the *Ateneo's* role in the Mexican Revolution come from *Ateneístas* themselves from their later recollections of the past, such as P. Henríquez Ureña, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945), 187–188: 'In Mexico, the political revolution of 1910 was preceded by a purely intellectual movement that began around 1907 in the Sociedad de Conferencias, later called the *Ateneo de México* (1909–1914) ... They attacked positivism, the official philosophy of the last twenty years of the regime of Porfirio Díaz.' In other words, we may be dealing with self-created mythologies; cf. C. Monsiváis, 'Notas sobre la cultural mexicana en el siglo XX', in *Historia General de México*, ed. García Martínez et al., 321–331. In these self-professed accounts, the ancient Greeks were presented as one of many foreign authors from which the members of the *Ateneo* sought inspiration; see Henríquez Ureña, *Estudios Mexicanos*, 267 and Miller, *Reinventing Modernity*, 113–114.
 - 38 In particular, they proposed the creation of a Popular Mexican University, whose purpose was to develop the culture of the people of Mexico, especially that of its working class; see Monsiváis, 'Notas', 321; Miller, *Reinventing Modernity*, 115 and

- Andújar, 'Hellenism and the American Utopia'.
- 39 Later Henríquez Ureña would link the experience of reading the ancient Greeks to a rebirth of the humanities in Mexico; see Andújar, 'Hellenism and the American Utopia'.
 - 40 Letter dated 2 December 1907, quoted in García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 125.
 - 41 In a letter to Reyes dated 29 January 1908, (Henríquez Ureña and Reyes, *Epistolario Íntimo*, 31–34) Henríquez Ureña discusses reading Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* for the first time.
 - 42 Henríquez Ureña, *Memorias*, 140: 'la lectura de Platón y del libro de Walter Pater sobre la filosofía platónica me convirtieron definitivamente al helenismo'.
 - 43 This is the earliest engagement with Pater in the Spanish-speaking world: according to Bann (S. Bann (ed.), *The Reception of Walter Pater in Europe* (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), xxii–iii), Pater is not translated in Spanish until the 1940s, in Spain and Argentina.
 - 44 According to Evangelista, *British Aestheticism*, 2: this concern with ancient Greece lies 'at the very heart' of Victorian literary aestheticism in all its formulations.
 - 45 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas* 2, 19.
 - 46 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas* 2, 328, García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 80.
 - 47 I can find no earlier reference to Pater. It is also unclear when or how the *Ateneístas* got hold of *Plato and Platonism*.
 - 48 P. Henríquez Ureña, *Estudios Griegos de Walter Pater. Traducción y notas de Pedro Henríquez Ureña* (2nd edn.) (Santo Domingo: Cielonaranja, 2008), 7.
 - 49 García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 95. Zuleta Álvarez, *Pedro Henríquez Ureña*, 51.
 - 50 Pineda Franco, *Geopolíticas*.
 - 51 Henríquez Ureña, *Walter Pater*, 13.
 - 52 Walter Pater, *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 166–167.
 - 53 For example, as Pater recounts Antiope's birth and abandonment (Pater, *Greek Studies*, 169).
 - 54 Pater, *Greek Studies*, 170.
 - 55 García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 80.
 - 56 Vasconcelos, *Ulises criollo*, 310.
 - 57 R. Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 253.
 - 58 Jenkyns, *The Victorians*, 253.
 - 59 Orrells, 'Pater and Nettleship', 300.
 - 60 Jenkyns, *The Victorians*, 254.
 - 61 D. Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 161–162.
 - 62 Donoghue, *Walter Pater*, 163.
 - 63 Donoghue, *Walter Pater*, 164.
 - 64 P. Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas* 6: 1911–1920, ed. M. Mena (Santo Domingo: Cielonaranja, 2014) (vol. 3), 266.
 - 65 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas* 6, 324: 'el último renacentista'.
 - 66 Quoted in Quintanilla, 'Dioniso', 631.

- 67 Andújar, 'Hellenism and the American Utopia'.
- 68 The first Latin American adaptation of a classical tragedy appears to have been Argentine Juan Cruz Varela's *Dido* (1823), which dramatizes in hendecasyllables Book 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*; See K. P. Nikoloutsos, 'Introduction', *Reception of Greek and Roman Drama in Latin America*, special edition of *Romance Quarterly* 59 (2012): 1–5. In the latter half of the nineteenth century there were a few European operas on classical subjects that toured in Mexico City, see Barrenechea, 'Greek Drama'.
- 69 For an account of the evening and the events that led to it, see Quintanilla 'Dioniso'.
- 70 See R. Andújar, 'Revolutionizing Greek Tragedy in Cuba: Virgilio Piñera's *Electra Garrigó*', in *Greek Drama in the Americas*, ed. Boshier, Macintosh, McConnell and Rankine, 361–379; R. Pianacci, *Antígona: una tragedia latinoamericana* (Irvine, CA: Ediciones de GESTOS, 2008); N. Kason Poulson, 'In Defense of the Dead: *Antígona furiosa*, by Griselda Gambaro', *Romance Quarterly* 59.1 (2012): 48–54.
- 71 E. Miranda Cancela, 'Pedro Henríquez Ureña y el mundo griego: *El nacimiento de Dionisos*', *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí* 1 (1988): 65–78 is the only treatment of the work.
- 72 A. Lesky (trans. M. Dillon), *Greek Tragic Poetry* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 13–15; T. B. L. Webster, 'Greek Tragedy' in *Fifty Years (and Twelve) of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 97–100.
- 73 In the play's 'justification' he accounts for this 'happy ending' of the play, citing Aeschylus's *Suppliants* and *Eumenides*, Sophocles's *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Philoctetes*, as well as Euripides's *Ion*, *Helen*, *Iphigenia at Tauris* and *Alcestis*: P. Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1: Teatro – Poesía – Cuento*, ed. M. Mena (Santo Domingo: Cielonaranja, 2014), 25.
- 74 To engage with a fragmentary author such as Phrynichus is extremely difficult, given that we know very little beyond the nine play titles the sparse fragments that survive. Most of what is known about him comes from the parody in Aristophanes's *Wasps* 1476–1537 and the *Suda*, which provides some additional basic information regarding his victories. Any information beyond these titles is speculative; see Lesky, *Greek Tragic Poetry*, 32–36; H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Problems of Early Greek Tragedy: Pratinas and Phrynichus', in *Greek Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 225–237; M. Wright, *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy Vol. 1: Neglected Authors* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 17–27, 208–210. It appears, however, that Phrynichus wrote a play about Actaeon, who was the son of Autonoe, sister to Semele and daughter of Cadmus – it therefore may have featured Semele, cf. Lloyd-Jones, 'Problems', 231–232.
- 75 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas* 1, 23.
- 76 Pater, *Greek Studies*, 17–18.
- 77 D. D. Leitaó, *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59–63, offers a summary of ancient sources both literary and artistic on the thigh birth of Dionysus.
- 78 In a letter dated 31 January 1908 Henríquez Ureña even recommends it to Alfonso Reyes (Henríquez Ureña and Reyes, *Epistolario Íntimo*, 37).
- 79 In fact both also mention Thebes in close proximity to 'vengo' ('I come'), in the same manner as Euripides's *Bacchae* 1 (Ἦκω Διὸς παῖς τήνδε Θηβαίαν χθόνα / I, son of Zeus, **come** to this land of **Thebes**): Semele: '**Vengo**, mujeres de **Tebas**,

del palacio en donde fui otro tiempo hija dilecta y soy ahora recibida con ceño adusto' (Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1*, 15) and Dionisos: '**Vengo** tan sólo a anunciaros mi reinado; **Tebas**, patria de mi madre muerta, será la primera ciudad helena que conozca mi culto' (Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1*, 41).

- 80 This is of course conveniently ignoring Sophocles's *Oedipus at Colonus*.
- 81 For example, his 1917 master's thesis at the University of Minnesota, *The Irregular Stanza in the Spanish Poetry of Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, or his 1920 publication *La versificación irregular en la poesía castellana* (*Irregular Versification in Spanish Poetry*); cf. Reyes, 'Encuentros', 57–58.
- 82 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1*, 26. Places similarly receive epithets, see, for example, 41: 'la Lidia rica en oro y en la Frigia famosa por sus corceles' (Gold-rich Lydia and in Phrygia, famous for its steeds).
- 83 This was the understanding at the time; see A. M. Dale, 'Stasimon and hyporcheme', *Eranos* 48 (1950): 14–20. His 'justification' also makes reference to the fact that the ancient chorus used singular and plural pronouns rather arbitrarily: Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1*, 24.
- 84 For example, Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1*, 35: Cadmus: 'con golpes hiero mi pecho, meso con desesperación mis cabellos.'
- 85 Cf. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 121 = 138 = 159: αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εἴ νικάτω.
- 86 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 1*, 43–44.
- 87 A. Ford, 'A Song to Match My Song: Lyric Doubling in Euripides' *Helen*', in *Allusion, Authority, and Truth: Critical Perspectives on Greek Poetic and Rhetorical Praxis*, ed. P. Mitsis and C. Tsagalis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 283–302.
- 88 For example, in a 1903 essay on D'Annunzio (Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 2*, 14) or in a 1905 essay partly on Oscar Wilde (Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 2*, 20).
- 89 Henríquez Ureña, *Estudios Mexicanos*, 247: 'Caso recorrió toda la filosofía de Nietzsche'.
- 90 Henríquez Ureña, *Obras Completas 2*, 102–108.
- 91 Henríquez Ureña and Reyes, *Epistolario Íntimo*, 83, letter dated 11 January 1909.
- 92 'Es lo más hermoso que ha salido de la pluma de Ud. (a lo menos entre lo que yo conozco), y es una de las cosas más bellas de la nueva literatura hispanoamericana', letter to Henríquez Ureña dated 12 May 1910, quoted in J. J. De Lara, *Pedro Henríquez Ureña, su vida y su obra* (Santo Domingo: Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña, 1975), 39.
- 93 British Library General Reference Collection 11729.ee.18. It is not certain whether Murray read the work before he donated it.
- 94 In this manner he is a crucial precedent for Alfonso Reyes, who, according to Conn (R. Conn, *The Politics of Philology: Alfonso Reyes and the Invention of the Latin American Literary Tradition* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002), 14), wished to create 'an utopian Mexican and Latin American Republic of Letters, a Weimar, of sorts'. See also García Morales, *El Ateneo*, 186: who discusses this international intellectual elite in terms of Platonic symposia.
- 95 N. Goldschmidt, 'Absent Presence: *pater Ennius* in Renaissance Europe', *Classical Receptions Journal* 4.1 (2012): 1–19.
- 96 Miller, *Reinventing Modernity*, 109.

Chapter 9

- 1 See Westminster Abbey, 'Poets of the First World War', 2017. Available online: <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/poets-of-the-first-world-war> (accessed 23 June 2017). The problematic category 'War Poetry' is usually said to have been established in 1931 with the publication of Edmund Blunden's edition of Wilfrid Owen: see Bernard Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War* (London: Constable, 1965), 5.
- 2 During the year when this essay was being written, a certain revival of interest in Jones was suggested by a BBC TV documentary presented by Owen Sheers, *The Greatest Poem of World War One*, on 14 July 2016, and by The Welsh National Opera's new opera based on Jones's poem with music by Iain Bell.
- 3 For this sense of the Latin noun *limes*, *limitis* see, for example, Tacitus, *Agricola* 2.7 and *Germania* 29. Numerical references in my text are to the page numbers in David Jones, *In Parenthesis*, with a Note of Introduction by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, [1937] 2014).
- 4 This and most of my other information about Jones's life is derived from the scrupulously researched biography of Thomas Dilworth, *David Jones: Engraver, Soldier, Painter, Poet* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2017).
- 5 See Cardinal H. E. Manning, *The Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost* (London: Burns & Oates, 1875), i.17: 'Those who upon a dying bed receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.'
- 6 E. B. Pickthorn, *Report on Casualties Sustained by Personnel of H.M.S. Kent during Action of Falklands Islands, 11th December 1914* (National Archives, ADM 1/8405/459, 1914).
- 7 The layout of the text throughout this chapter reproduces that specified by Jones in Jones, *In Parenthesis*; as an engraver, he saw the look of the printed page as contributing to its meaning.
- 8 Keith Aldritt, *David Jones: Writer and Artist* (London: Constable, 2003), 9–13.
- 9 Anthony Hyne, *David Jones: A Fusilier at the Front* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1995), 11. On Lloyd George and Welsh recruitment see Emyr Price, *David Lloyd George* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 197–201.
- 10 The authoritative study of Jones's military experiences is now Thomas Dilworth, *David Jones and the Great War* (London: Enitharmon, 2012).
- 11 Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That: An Autobiography* (London: Cape, 1929), 211.
- 12 First published in Robert Graves, *Goliath and David* (London: Charles Whittingham & Co., 1917).
- 13 See Hyne, *David Jones*, 12.
- 14 Desirée Hirst, 'The Two Davids: Jones and Rosenberg', *The David Jones Journal* 6.1/2 (2017): 53.
- 15 David Cohen, 'Depth and Control in David Jones' *In Parenthesis*', in *The Achievement of David Jones*, ed. Cary Archard, Sandra Anstey and Gwyneth Lewis, *Poetry Wales* 17.4 (1982): 47.
- 16 David Jones, *The Dying Gaul, and Other Writings* (London: Faber, 1978), 132.

- 17 Hyne, *David Jones*, 13. On the implementation of chemical weapons in the First World War see William Moore, *Gas Attack! Chemical Warfare 1915–1918 and Afterwards* (London: Cooper, 1987).
- 18 Not published until after his death, in Jones, *The Dying Gaul*.
- 19 Yeats praised it in a conversation reported in Dilworth, *Jones and the Great War*, 217; Eliot pronounced it ‘a work of genius’ in Jones, *In Parenthesis*, vii; W. H. Auden, ‘The Geste Says This and the Man Who Was on the Field’, *Mid-Century Review* 39 (1962): 12–13; Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1980), 28; Peter Levi, ‘The Poetry of David Jones’, *Agenda* 5 (1967): 80–89.
- 20 Murray, ‘Dark and Stormy Night’, 3. For perceptive attempts at decoding the classical figures in Jones’s other, later major poem *Anathemata*, see however chapters 8 and 9 of Jonathan Miles, *Backgrounds to David Jones: A Study in Sources and Drafts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990).
- 21 See the letter of 15–19 July 1973 to René Hague, quoted in René Hague, *David Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), 9.
- 22 See especially Robert Bly’s essay ‘The Prose Poem as an Evolving Form’, in *Selected Poems*, ed. Robert Bly (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).
- 23 Jack Dudley, ‘Transcendence and the End of Modernist Aesthetics: David Jones’s *In Parenthesis*’, *Renascence* 65 (2013): 107.
- 24 Eleftherios Venizelos, at that time Prime Minister of Greece.
- 25 Beriah Gwynfe Evans, *Caradog: Drama Hanesyddol* (Caernarfon: Cyhoeddiedig gan yr awdwr, 1904) and Beriah Gwynfe Evans, *The Life Romance of Lloyd George* (London: Everyman, 1915). See further Edith Hall, ‘Celtic Caractacus: Welsh Nationalist or British Imperialist in the Long 19th Century?’ in *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in Britain 55 BC–2016 AD*, ed. Francesca and Rhys Kaminiski-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming) and Edith Hall And Henry Stead, *A People’s History of Classics* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).
- 26 See Edith Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: A Cultural History of Euripides’ Black Sea Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 135–142.
- 27 W. F. Jackson Knight, *Virgil, The Aeneid* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956), VI.606ff.
- 28 Evans Lansing Smith, *The Descent to the Underworld in Literature, Painting, and Film, 1895–1950: The Modernist Nekyia* (Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Smith, 2001), 7. See Edith Hall, *The Return of Ulysses. A Cultural History of Homer’s Odyssey* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), chapter 15.
- 29 *The Waste Land* 3.220–1, with the note on 3.228; T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts, Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 71, 82.
- 30 Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York: New Directions, [1950] 1971), 274, quoted in Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 147.
- 31 Ruth Falconer, *Hell in Contemporary Literature. Western Descent Narratives since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 27.
- 32 See further Patrick R. Query, *Ritual and the Idea of Europe in Interwar Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).

- 33 Thomas Dilworth, 'In Parenthesis as Chronicle', in *The Achievement of David Jones*, ed. Cary Archard, Sandra Anstey and Gwyneth Lewis, *Poetry Wales* 17.4 (1988): 42.
- 34 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1922] 1993), 688; Thomas Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning in the Poetry of David Jones* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 140–141.
- 35 Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning*, 149–152.
- 36 See especially Samantha Rayner, 'Death and the Grimly Voice in David Jones' *In Parenthesis*', in *The Arthurian Way of Death: The English Tradition*, ed. Karen Cherewatuk and K. S. Whetter (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), 226–240.
- 37 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 147.
- 38 Paul Robichaud, *Making the Past Present; David Jones, the Middle Ages, and Modernism* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007).
- 39 Murray, 'Dark and Stormy Night'.
- 40 Letter of 22 May 1962, in David Jones, *Dai Greatcoat: A Self-Portrait of David Jones in His Letters* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015).
- 41 H. C. Jones, *The Library of David Jones (1895–1974): A Catalogue* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1995).
- 42 Jones, *In Parenthesis*, xv.
- 43 Tate Gallery, London, T02036.
- 44 I am very grateful to Oswyn Murray for showing me one of these earlier nudes which is in his possession and for discussing various aspects of Jones's life and work with me. *In Parenthesis* made a profound impression on Murray as a young man: in a personal email of 27 June 2017 he wrote to me as follows (reproduced with his permission): 'I first came across *IP* as a schoolboy when my housemaster (a mathematician and Everest climber) invited me in to his study to listen to the original third programme broadcast; I bought it in the Marlborough bookshop. But I really came to understand it in the army: it was the only book (apart from TE Lawrence's *The Mint*) that spoke the truth honestly to a young national serviceman about to be sent to Suez in the criminal conspiracy of 1956: it spoke directly of my experience, and confirmed me in my life-long hatred of the officer class and the politicians. Later as I learned more of David Jones I chose him as my model for a new type of cultural history.'
- 45 Tate Gallery, London, T02037. This information is derived from the article 'Aphrodite in Aulis 1941' on the Tate Gallery website. Available online: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/jones-aphrodite-in-aulis-t02036> (accessed 24 June 2017).
- 46 A letter quoted in Hague, *David Jones*, 38.

Chapter 10

- 1 R. Williams, *Notes on the Underground* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 184 extends this new 'subterranean' class to workers of all mechanical industrial trades, including factory work. Before the common availability of pithead baths, supported by revenues following the 1919 Sankey Commission, miners would have to travel home soaked with mine water and sweat, and caked in coal dust.

- 2 Siegfried Sassoon 'The Case for the Miners', *The Nation* (New York), 18 May 1921: 715.
- 3 Jonathan Rose, *Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010 [Second Edition]).
- 4 H. Stead and E. Hall (eds), *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 19.
- 5 For the use of classical culture and alleged deficiencies of education in political debate in the Romantic era see H. Stead, *A Cockney Catullus: The Reception of Catullus in Romantic Britain, 1795–1821* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 205–222 and Stead and Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics*, 55–78.
- 6 See, for example, Rose, *Intellectual Life*, especially chapter 4; Stead and Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics*; Annie Ravenhill-Johnson and Paula James, *The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem, 1850–1925* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), on Trades Union banner imagery.
- 7 Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), 2.
- 8 Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 2.
- 9 Karl Marx (trans. B. Fowkes), *Capital* (London: Penguin, 1976/1990), Part 4, especially 626–635.
- 10 Marx, *Capital*, 280.
- 11 Marx, *Capital*, 280.
- 12 Ruth Falconer, *Hell in Contemporary Literature. Western Descent Narratives since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 1.
- 13 The 'blue scars' of colliers are an evocative example of the visual marks born by underground workers. Industrial Britain's history is a catalogue of mining disasters and the terrible health hazards, for example 'Collier's Lung', and low life expectancies are well documented. See, for example, J. Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984–1993).
- 14 S. Barstow, 'Chaplin, Sidney (1916–1986)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 15 The term 'pit university' was used in reference to the Settlement by Tisa Schulenburg in her unpublished autobiographical 'Sketches from the life' held in the Newcastle University's Robinson Library, Special Collections, GB 186 SC/8/7/13.
- 16 Chaplin (Sid) Archive at Newcastle University's Robinson Library, Special Collections, GB 186 SC/4.
- 17 *COAL*, Vol. 5 (January 1952), 6.
- 18 At point of writing, this theological magazine remains obscure.
- 19 For an introduction to the study of working-class reading history see Rose, *Intellectual Life*, xi–xiii and 1–2, with full bibliography.
- 20 Mining Industry Act, 1920.
- 21 *COAL*, Vol. 13 (January 1960), 6.
- 22 In 1957 there were also two CISWO classical scholarships awarded to F. Joy Roberts and John Brammah: *COAL*, Vol. 11 (September 1957), 10–11.
- 23 *COAL*, Vol. 5 (January 1952), 6.
- 24 Durham University, Special Collections, UND/DB15. Thank you to all at the

- Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections, for their assistance and expertise.
- 25 E. G. Pace, 'The Extra-mural Work of the Durham Vision of the University of Durham' (undated), 13. Durham University, Special Collections, UND/DB15.
 - 26 More names come up in the archive, but the whole enterprise calls out for closer scrutiny and more space.
 - 27 Durham University, Special Collections, B15/K/P/b.
 - 28 D. Wordsworth (ed. J. C. Shairp), *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland A.D. 1803* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874), 15.
 - 29 John C. Crawford, *Wanlockhead Miners' Library: A Guide Book* (Glasgow: Wanlockhead Museum Trust, 1978), 1–16.
 - 30 S. James, *Catalogue of the Wanlockhead Miners' Library* (Paisley: Paisley College of Technology for Wanlockhead Museum Trust, 1979).
 - 31 On the rise of the WEA (est. 1903) and its relation to the classics see Goff in Stead and Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics*, 216–234.
 - 32 Ernest Rhys, *Wales England Wed* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1940), 56.
 - 33 Rhys, *Wales*, 55.
 - 34 Rhys, *Wales*, 55.
 - 35 Rhys, *Wales*, 57–58.
 - 36 Rhys, *Wales*, 273. On Gorky's project as 'World Literature' see M. Khomitsky, 'World Literature, Soviet Style: A Forgotten Episode in the History of the Idea', *Ab Imperio* 3 (2013): 119–154. with full bibliography.
 - 37 Jack Lawson, *A Man's Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 95.
 - 38 Lawson, *A Man's Life*, 50.
 - 39 Lawson, *A Man's Life*, 94.
 - 40 Lawson, *A Man's Life*, 70.
 - 41 See Marx, *Capital*, 627–628, where a miner explains to 'Bourgeois Vivian', a member of the 1866 Select Committee on Mines, that while reading down the mine is theoretically possible, its probability is diminished by the fact that he would first need to be able to afford candles, and then neglect his duty and suffer the consequences. It is likely that reading material taken down the mine was meant for reading *after* work.
 - 42 William Feaver, *Pitmen Painters: The Ashington Group 1934–1984* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988), 17. Emphasis added.
 - 43 On the British Settlement Movement and Toynbee Hall, see Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).
 - 44 R. McManners and G. Wales, *Way to the Better: The Spennymoor Settlement* (Bishop Auckland: Gemini Productions, 2008).
 - 45 'A guide to the Archives and Special Collections at Durham University Library Website.' Available online: https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/collection_information (accessed 1 September 2017).
 - 46 Hadwin in (unpaginated) foreword to McManners and Wales, *Way to the Better*.
 - 47 Anthony Howard, 'Crossman, Richard Howard Stafford (1907–1974)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

- 48 Fred Dainton, 'Morris, Charles Richard, Baron Morris of Grasmere (1898–1990)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 49 *Who Can Save the World?* was broadcast on 3 March 1936 at 19.30.
- 50 *The Listener*, 11 March 1936, XV.374: 490–492.
- 51 For discussion with full bibliography see Stephen Hodkinson, 'Sparta and Nazi Germany in Mid-20th-Century British Liberal and Left-Wing Thought', in *Sparta: The Body Politic*, ed. A. Powell and S. Hodkinson (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2010), 301–312.
- 52 Hodkinson, 'Sparta', 304.
- 53 For more on the use of classics by members of the Wilson government see Simpson in Stead and Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics*, 269–291.

Chapter 11

- 1 In this sense, my study of Borges's classicism is in close dialogue with the collection edited by Graziosi and Greenwood (B. Graziosi and E. Greenwood (eds), *Homer in the Twentieth Century: Between World Literature and the Western Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)) on the reception of Homer in the twentieth century.
- 2 Borges published most of his prose and verse first in separate form, either in newspaper literary sections or journals. The dates of publication given here correspond to those given in J. L. Borges, *Obras Completas* (4 vols.) (Buenos Aires: Emece, 2002); J. L. Borges, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. J.-P. Bernés, P. Bénichou, S. Bénichou-Roubaud (Paris: Gallimard, 2010); J. L. Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. E. Weinberger, trans. E. Allen, S. J. Levine and E. Weinberger (New York: Penguin Books, 1998); and J. L. Borges, *Collected Fictions*, trans. A. Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1998). For the original place and date of publication of Borges's oeuvre, see the relevant entries in J. L. Borges, *Obras completas* I–IV and J. L. Borges, *Oeuvres complètes* I–II.
- 3 For Homer as a pre-classical author, see G. Nagy, *Homer The Preclassic* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2010). For the importance of reading Homer as a pre-classic in his cultural history, see J. Porter, 'Homer: The History of an Idea', in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. R. Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 324–343. While I subscribe to Nagy's and Porter's arguments, for stylistic reasons I will use the term 'classic' rather than '(pre-)classical' in the remainder of my discussion.
- 4 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 292.
- 5 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 292.
- 6 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 292–293.
- 7 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 293.
- 8 L. Jansen, *Borges' Classics: Global Encounters with the Graeco-Roman Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- 9 The Borgesian narrator cites the line 'truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, depository of deeds, witness of the past, exemplar and adviser to the present, and the future's counselor'.
- 10 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 92–93.
- 11 See Sarlo (B. Sarlo, *A Writer on the Edge* (London and New York: Verso, 1993),

- 31–33) for the implications of this paradox in Borgesian poetics.
- 12 It is important to remember that, above all, Menard's project is for Borges a project of translation, which gets one inevitably into a dialect of sameness and difference, and the paradoxes engendered thereby.
- 13 For a seminal study of this notion in classical literature that has influenced subsequent, worldwide discussion, see C. Martindale, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- 14 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 95.
- 15 Jansen, *Borges' Classics*.
- 16 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 363.
- 17 M. Wood, 'Borges and Theory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jorge Luis Borges*, ed. E. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 36–37.
- 18 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 365.
- 19 Jansen, *Borges' Classics*.
- 20 Jorge Luis Borges and Osvaldo Ferrari, 'On Memory', in *Jorge Luis Borges, Osvaldo Ferrari Conversations 1*, trans. J. Wilson (London and New York: Seagull Books, 2014), 265–266.
- 21 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 136–137.
- 22 See N. Bär, 'Borges se anticipó medio siglo a las neurociencias', *La Nación*, 4 February 2010. Available online: <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1229225-borges-se-antipo-medio-siglo-a-las-neurociencias> (accessed 20 August 2017).
- 23 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 135.
- 24 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 137. On the presence of Pliny and Horace in Borges's 'Funes', see the excellent discussion by Zonana (V. G. Zonana, 'Memoria del mundo clásico en "Funes el memorioso"', *Revista de Literaturas Modernas* 36 (2006): 207–233).
- 25 Warm thanks to Luke Roman for discussing these issues with me and helping me think the question of memory and totality in Borges's classicism further.
- 26 S. Butler (ed.), *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
- 27 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 121.
- 28 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 115.
- 29 Butler, *Deep Classics*; L. Jansen, 'Borges and the Disclosure of Antiquity', in *Deep Classics*, ed. Butler, 291–309.
- 30 Jansen, *Borges' Classics*.
- 31 Sarlo, *A Writer on the Edge*.
- 32 A *payador* is a gaucho minstrel who improvises *payadas*, which are competitive songs about the countryside life. *Mutatis mutandis*, the *payador* can be understood as a modern version of the pastoral *cantores* one finds in Virgil's *Eclogues*.
- 33 'The Argentine Writer and Tradition' (1951), Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, 420.
- 34 Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, 425–426.
- 35 Jorge Luis Borges and Osvaldo Ferrari, 'The Eternal Traveller', in *Conversations 1*, trans. Wilson, 8.
- 36 Jorge Luis Borges and Osvaldo Ferrari, 'Prologue', in *Conversations 1*, trans.

Wilson, ix.

- 37 The terms 'world' and 'global' (French *mondial* and Spanish *mundial*), as applied to literature, have undergone intensive critique and scrutiny in recent scholarship in Comparative Literature. Views on what the term mean vary widely (see P. Cheah, 'What Is a World? On World Literature as World-Making Activity', *Daedalus* 137.3 (2008): 26–38; D. Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013)), and ultimately are concerned with debates about: (1) the extent to which the cultural capital and hegemony of Western Europe and North America dictate what constitutes the notion of literature at the national and international levels; (2) the degree to which literary cultures outside the hegemonic 'centre' welcome, reject or attempt to overcome the label of 'peripheral' (mostly as a critical response to P. Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2004) and F. Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', in *Debating World Literature*, ed. C. Prendergast (London: Verso, 2004), 148–162) and (3) the future of Comparative Literature as a discipline, procedure and institutionalized body of knowledge where 'world literature' is studied and promoted (G. Huggan, 'The Trouble with World Literature', in *A Companion to Comparative Literature*, ed. A. Behdad and D. Thomas (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 490–506). Even the manner in which one presents is the idea of world literature is problematic. Some scholars find the concept of 'world-literature' with a hyphen restrictive (A. Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Verso, 2013)), and prefer to think about 'the literatures of the world' in 'transcultural' (A. Pettersson, 'Transcultural Literary History: Beyond Constricting Notions of World Literature', *New Literary History* 39 (2008): 463–479) or, as it has been recently proposed, 'ecological' terms (Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature*), in an attempt to map out the notion of literature as a constellation of interacting cultural systems. For further facets and implications of this important question, see Jansen, *Borges' Classics*.
- 38 The Shinto is the ethnic religion of Japan, whose ritual practices and observations are based on a collection of native beliefs that connect modern Japan with its multiple ancient traditions. For Borges and the Shinto, see M. T. Forero and L. Garabieta, *Borges y oriente* (Buenos Aires: Diseño, 2013) and R. Fiddian, 'Post-Colonial Borges', in *Companion*, ed. Williamson, 104–105.
- 39 Jansen, *Borges' Classics*.
- 40 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 194.
- 41 We have no tangible evidence that Borges was in any great detail aware of the 'Homeric Question(s)'. Broadly speaking, this debate is between 'oralists', who have tended to argue that 'Homer' is more or less synonymous with 'the tradition', and those who believe that behind the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* there was a single poet called 'Homer'. For a study of this debate, see R. Fowler, 'The Homeric Question', in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. R. Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 220–232. I am indebted to Bob Fowler for generously sharing his knowledge of this question with me.
- 42 Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, 479.
- 43 A conclusion that is attractive yet highly misleading when it comes to Borges's complex classicism.
- 44 On Borges's peripherality, see A. De Toro, 'Post-Coloniality and Post-Modernity: Jorge Luis Borges: The Periphery in the Centre, the Periphery as the Centre, the Centre of the Periphery', in *Borders and Margins: Postcolonialism and Post-*

Chapter 12

- 1 This is not to say that conservatism has not been studied before by classical reception scholars (the interest for this topic is certainly growing, especially among historians) but it has not been put on the map as a distinct phenomenon. For instance, there is no separate *lemma* for conservatism nor considerable attention in related *lemmata* in the otherwise comprehensive reference work A. Grafton, G. W. Most and S. Settis (eds), *The Classical Tradition* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
- 2 For classical reception studies’ interaction with the theoretical humanities (esp. aesthetics, cultural theory and cultural studies), see M. De Pourcq, ‘Classical Reception Studies. Reconceiving the Study of the Classical Tradition’, *The International Journal of the Humanities* 9.4 (2012): 219–225.
- 3 A. Compagnon, *Les antimodernes de Joseph de Maistre à Roland Barthes* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 9.
- 4 CNN Late Night, 6 August 2016.
- 5 This refers to a classic interpretation by Freud in his 1922 essay ‘Das Medusenhaupt’. See also V. Zajko and M. Leonard, *Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 6 See online: <https://www.blocidentitaire-idf.com/bloc-identitaire-idf/les-antigones/> (accessed 6 March 2017).
- 7 An important caveat regarding the sources is in place here. When dealing with political communication (in this case mostly public speeches, op-eds and books), it is usually unclear whether the texts in question have been written by the politician rather than by one or more ghost writers. What matters here is that they are in principle authorized by the politician to become part of his public persona.
- 8 D. C. Stanton, *The Aristocrat as Art. A Study of the Honnête Homme and the Dandy in Seventeenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
- 9 D. Pels, *De geest van Pim, het gedachtegoed van een politieke dandy* (Amsterdam: Anthos, 2004).
- 10 Stanton, *Aristocrat*.
- 11 J. H. Knoll, A.-D. Ludewig and J. H. Schoeps (eds), *Der Dandy: Ein kulturhistorisches Phänomen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2013).
- 12 R. K. Garelick, *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
- 13 G. A. B. De Vugt, *The Polit-Dandy. On the Emergence of a Political Paradigm* (Diss.: Tilburg University, 2015), 223.
- 14 Baudelaire wrote extensively on the dandy in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (1863), for example, ‘Le dandysme est le dernier éclat d’héroïsme dans les décadences’ (Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*. Volume II (ed. C. Pichois) (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 711).

- 15 D. Madsen and P. G. Snow, *The Charismatic Bond: Political Behavior in Time of Crisis* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).
- 16 P. Fortuyn, *De verweesde samenleving: een religieus-sociologisch traktaat* (Uithoorn and Rotterdam: Karakter – Speakers Academy Uitgeverij, 2002), 17–18, 197 and 203.
- 17 J. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion. Volume 3. The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 18 J. Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans. How the Nazis Usurped Europe's Classical Past* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016).
- 19 P. Fortuyn, *Tegen de islamisering van onze cultuur. Nederlandse identiteit als fundament* (Amsterdam: A. W. Bruna, 1997).
- 20 Z. Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017).
- 21 M. Silk, I. Gildenhard and R. Barrow, *The Classical Tradition. Art, Literature, Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2014), 12–13.
- 22 See, for example, the catalogue of the exhibition 'Merkur, Mars & Co.: Vom Mythos zur Marke' (S. Traxler and F. Lang, *Einfach Göttlich! Mythologisches von der Antike bis zur heutigen Werbung* (Eisenstadt: Landesmuseum Burgenland, 2015)).
- 23 M. Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory. The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 4.
- 24 M. Rothberg, *Multi-Directional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1–2. The Smithsonian National Museum of African American National History and Culture eventually opened its doors in 2016, with worldwide media attention.
- 25 For further discussion, see Gideon Nisbet, *Ancient Greece in Film and Popular Culture* (Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2006), 72–ff. and G. N. Murray, 'Zack Snyder, Frank Miller and Herodotus: Three Takes on the 300 Spartans', *Akroterion* 52.1 (2007): 11–35.
- 26 M. Schoonenboom, 'Wij zijn de redding van Europa! Oostenrijk in slimfit-shirt tegen de islamisering', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 13 July 2016: 28–29.
- 27 B. De Wever, 'Wie niet wil vechten, zal op zijn knieën verder mogen leven. Bart De Wever houdt een pleidooi voor meer respect voor de Europese waarden', *De Morgen*, 30 July 2016. Available online: <http://www.demorgen.be/opinie/wie-niet-wil-vechten-zal-op-zijn-knieen-verder-mogen-leven-bd3625ff/> (last accessed 3 September 2017).
- 28 The Lambda logo, for one, is used on a wide range of merchandising objects, see, for example, the online shop 'Phalanx Europa'.
- 29 In French, this conspiracy theory is called 'le Grand Remplacement', after Renaud Camus's eponymous book.
- 30 E. Wehling, *Politisches Framing. Wie eine Nation sich ihr Denken einredet – und daraus Politik Macht* (Köln: Halem, 2016).
- 31 Falzar and M. Paulo, *Bad Bartje. I. Acta est fabula* (Lasne: Kennes éditions, 2014).
- 32 I. Maly, *N-VA. Analyse van een politieke ideologie* (Berchem: Epo, 2012); I. Maly, "'Scientific Nationalism.'" N-VA and the Discursive Battle for the Flemish Nation', *Nations and Nationalism* 22.2 (2016): 266–286; M. De Pourcq, 'De Romeinen van Bart De Wever. Klassieke referenties in de hedendaagse politieke cultuur', *Lampas* 48.4 (2015): 411–423.

- 33 See online: <https://www.n-va.be/wie-is-wie/bart-de-wever> (accessed 3 September 2017). All translations of Dutch sources are mine.
- 34 J. Visker, 'Bart de Wever: Zijn leus is toch Vlaams.' NRC/Handelsblad (weekendbijlage *Opinie en Debat*), 7–8 June 2014.
- 35 P. Hoftijzer, 'Tuta sub aegide Pallas. Drukkersmerken door de eeuwen heen.' *Jaarverslag 2004 van de Koninklijke Brill NV* (2005): 75.
- 36 E. Burke, 'Reflections of the Revolution in France (1790)', in *The Impact of the French Revolution. Texts from Britain in the 1790s*, ed. I. Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 61–103.
- 37 W. Van Driessche, 'Bart De Wever in Rome. "Julius Caesar is mijn enige idool."' *De Tijd*, 29 August 2009. Available online: http://www.tijd.be/nieuws/archief/bart_de_wever_in_rome_politicus_N_va_Julius_Caesar_is_mijn_enige_idool.8225453-1615.ar (accessed 3 September 2017).
- 38 For example, B. De Wever, *Het kostbare weefsel. Vijf jaar maatschappijkritiek* (Kapellen: Pelckmans, 2008), 20–21.
- 39 K. Windels, *De ware De Wever. Portret van de populairste politicus van het land* (Gent: Borgerhoff & Lambrigts, 2012), 157.
- 40 Windels, *De Wever*, 155–156.
- 41 B. De Wever (ed. K. Cambien), *Ik ben (niet) staatsgevaarlijk. 1001 inspirerende oneliners en quotes* (Van Halewyck: Leuven, 2014), 148.
- 42 B. Souffreau, 'Gezworen vijanden opnieuw dikke vrienden: De Wever en De Decker', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 29 December 2009. Available online: <http://www.gva.be/cnt/aid646292/gezworen-vijanden-opnieuw-dikke-vrienden-de-wever-en-dedecker> (accessed 2 May 2018).
- 43 See Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, 709.
- 44 Van Driessche, 'Julius Caesar'; E. Eerdekens, 'Bart De Wever: "Ik wil Julius Caesar zijn"', *Knack*, 13 April 2013. Available online: <http://www.knack.be/nieuws/belgie/bart-de-wever-ik-wil-julius-caesar-zijn/article-normal-92307.html> (accessed 3 September 2017).
- 45 B. De Wever, 'Augustus legde de basis van de westerse beschaving', *De Tijd*, 19 August 2014. Available online: http://www.tijd.be/opinie/analyse/Augustus_legde_de_basis_van_de_westerse_beschaving.9534664-2336.art?ckc=1 (accessed 3 September 2017).
- 46 Windels, *De Wever*, 141–142.
- 47 B. Johnson, *The Dream of Rome* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), 31.
- 48 Johnson, *Rome*, 66, 110.
- 49 B. De Wever, *Ik ben (niet) staatsgevaarlijk. 1001 inspirerende oneliners en quotes*, ed. K. Cambien (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 2014), 231.
- 50 Johnson, *Rome*, 164–165; De Wever, *Oneliners*, 225–226.
- 51 Clarke's statements on the relative uselessness of studying Classics were done in an interview with *The Sunday Times* and generated a lively debate in the media. See, for example, online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/2712833.stm (accessed 21 September 2017).
- 52 Johnson, *Rome*, 233–234.
- 53 See online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Au0njcQDBM> (accessed 3 September 2017). See also B. De Wever, 'Hoe ik het onderwijs van de toekomst

zie', *Knack*, 24 June 2013. Available online: <http://www.knack.be/nieuws/bart-de-wever-hoe-ik-het-onderwijs-van-de-toekomst-zie/article-opinion-83119.html> (accessed 3 September 2017).

54 Rothberg, *Memory*.

55 Hampsher-Monk, *Revolution*, 1.

56 E. Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 67.

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